Everybody's Magazine

JUNE 1921

25¢

Fiction: WILLIAM PATTERSON WHITE · MELVILLE DAVISSON POST · J. H. ROBBINS · A. S. M. HUTCHINSON · CHARLES DIVINE · NALBRO BARTLEY · IRVING BACHELLER · H. C. BAILEY

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They Struck It Rich—

had "stumbled on the gosh-wallopin'est vein of gold-bearin' rock in all creation." But it doesn't take them long to find out that the law, alone, isn't enough to protect their claim—that the quick trigger generally settles matters more effectively. Up against two rival bands of desperate gun toters, and with crooked gamblers, blackmailers, stage robbers, and every other sinister element ready to take a hand, they find themselves unavoidably rushing headlong into a series of highly tensioned situations that crowd one another in

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How In One Evening I Learned The Secret of Drawing

By Walter Sayden

FROM boyhood, I have always wanted to draw things. I suppose there are hundreds of young fellows who feel the same way as I did. I often said that if it were possible, I should choose commercial art as a profession. It was not the big salaries and independence enjoyed by artists and cartoonists that appealed to me, it was the fascination of the game itself.

He was drawing little pictures

But I could hardly draw a straight line. My friends used to have laughing hysterics at my attempts to sketch things.

One morning, as I was coming into town on the eight o'clock train, I met Larry Stafford. I had come into town with him every day for years, usually passing the time discussing the morning papers.

But this particular morning he had a pad and pencil in his hand. He was drawing little pictures of things that looked like a series of small animals.

"What on earth are you doing?" I asked in amazement.

Larry smiled. "Don't be afraid, I am quite sane. These little pictures are part of a scheme of mine. I am illustrating an idea. They are supposed to be a graphic representation of a deal I am putting over. They speak louder than words."

I watched him,—amazed to see that he drew very well indeed. As he proceeded, and the drawings became more life-like, my curiosity was aroused—I asked him about it.

"Why, I am surprised that you ask me!" he answered. "Look how easy it all is,"—and he quickly sketched a few other figures and grinned at my amazement.

"There is just one little secret, of the whole thing, Walter," he added. "I never drew before in my life, and you see,—these little sketches really are not bad, are they? You have always wanted to draw, and even if you don't become an artist, you will find it a mighty convenient thing to know. This secret makes drawing as easy as writing. Let's get together this evening and I'll show you how simple it is,—I'll give you a little lesson."

The Greatest Surprise of My Life

That night I was astonished to learn that there was but One Great Rule that covered every sort of drawing. I mastered this rule in just fifty minutes, and in two hours found that I could draw. Think of it! It was almost like magic. I had never before been able to draw a recognizable object.

At this time I was a salesman, so that the only time that I had to practice and apply this secret, this Rule, was in spare minutes when at the office or at home. But I progressed with almost unbelievable rapidity.

My First Real Drawing

One day I was talking with a buyer. Remembering Larry's idea pictures, I drew some figures to illustrate the point I was trying to establish. He looked at the pictures and caught my idea at once. Before I left he gave me a larger order than I had ever before received from him. *My pictures* had put my idea over.

This worked so well, that I tried it again—several times, in fact—and each time I got the same results. My pictures seemed to make a stronger appeal than my words, and my sales increased tremendously.

Mr. Charles Lederer, the well known newspaper cartoonist, after years of practical working experience, has developed one great simple rule for success in all branches of commercial art. This amazing secret has revolutionized the entire theory of drawing. It means that drawing can be easy for *you* as writing. Out of his many years of work-a-day experience, Mr. Lederer has given to all The One Big Secret of Drawing.

But that was not all. Two weeks later, I overheard a conversation that struck me as amusing. I wrote it down, illustrated it, and, just for fun, sent it to one of the humorous weeklies. A few days later, to my great surprise and pleasure, I received a check from the art editor and a request for more contributions.

From that time on, I sent in little sketches and jokes, more or less regularly. A few months ago, I received an offer which startled me. The magazine for which I had been drawing wished to take me on the regular staff at a greater salary than I was then making.

My love of drawing also came strongly to the front and, needless to say, I accepted at once. The first thing I did was to tell Larry Stafford, what his idea had led to. When he heard that I was actually a successful artist on a real magazine he gasped with amazement.

I told him how the same One Great Rule of drawing which had made it easy for *him* to draw had meant even more to me—and how this simple home-study course of the famous artist, Charles Lederer, which we had gone over that evening had given me the secret which had meant so much to me.

Larry laughed at my enthusiasm, but admitted that such a remarkable success as mine was enough to make a man a bit optimistic.

Easier than Learning to Operate a Typewriter

Through this amazing system, drawing can be *taught* as easily as anything else. In his simple, home-study course this world-famous cartoonist, Charles Lederer, teaches you to draw just as a business school teaches you to keep books, or operate a typewriter or write shorthand. But it is a hundred times simpler than any of those accomplishments.

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And the best part of it all is, that the course teaches you to draw so that you can *sell* your pictures right from the start. That is really the most important part after all. Everyone wants to sell his work, and that is just what you can do, with Mr. Lederer's great secret.

Don't misunderstand, I am not praising myself. The point is this,—if I who never was able to draw at all, could [illegible] this remarkable success, others can do the same, or better.

See for yourself,—send for the course and try it out. If you can draw at all you will probably get along even faster than I, and you will find modern commercial art the most fascinating and delightful work imaginable. Remember, that opportunities in this uncrowded field are unlimited. There is a constantly growing demand for cartoonists and illustrators. If you like to draw, or if you *think* that you *would* like to draw, don't miss this wonderful opportunity to learn in an evening or two of your spare time.

Five Days' Free Trial

We want you to prove to your own satisfaction the tremendous value of Mr. Lederer's discovery. It will not cost you one penny. We want you to examine the Entire Course at our expense for five days. If you will just fill out the coupon below, detach it and mail it to us, we will gladly send you the complete course for your approval. We feel sure that when you see the surprising simplicity of this method you will agree with us that it is the greatest discovery ever made in this field.

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But act *at once*. Learn to draw—whether or not your aim is commercial art. It is a big asset no matter which field you are in. Let us disclose to you the whole secret. Detach the coupon and mail it *today*.

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EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE

Number 6 JUNE, 1921 Vol. XLIV

CONTENTS

THE SILVER BOX. A Story — CHARLES DIVINE — 5
The Oriental has his own subtle ways in affairs of the heart
ILLUSTRATED by CHARLES SARKA

THE RIDER OF GOLDEN BAR. A Serial Story. II — WILLIAM PATTERSON WHITE — 14
Billy Wingo runs for sheriff and Hazel Walton rejects a suitor
ILLUSTRATED by REMINGTON SCHUYLER

WISE OR OTHERWISE. A Story — NALBRO BARTLEY — 23
Old Doctor Bellamy cancels a long-standing debt
ILLUSTRATED by J. HENRY

FROM FUNERALS TO FUN. Everybody's Entertainers Series
Public and private glimpses of Frank Tinney's comedy art — TIMOTHY VANE — 30

THE "MYSTERIOUS STRANGER" DEFENSE. A Mystery Story — MELVILLE DAVISSON POST — 32
A masterly cross-examination reveals some unexpected evidence
ILLUSTRATED by FORREST C. CROOKS

PROSE OR WORSE — GRIDLEY ADAMS — 37
Gems of unconscious humor from the day's news
ILLUSTRATED by STUART HAY

THE PACK. A Story — F. ST. MARS — 38
Of red tooth and claw in the African jungle
ILLUSTRATED by REMINGTON SCHUYLER

WHAT THE PUBLIC GOT — ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT — 42
Back in the days when Minnie Maddern Fiske courted stardom

RIDDLES. A Two-Part Story. Part II — IRVING BACHELLER — 44
Riddles discloses his identity and ends an eventful holiday
ILLUSTRATED by CHARLES A. MacLELLAN

DAISY FIELDS. Verse — EDMUND LEAMY — 53

THE FOOL: TALE OF A KING'S HEIR. A Story — H. C. BAILEY — 54
Bran, the wandering minstrel, takes a hand in the making of a king
ILLUSTRATED by FORREST C. CROOKS

MR. DOWNEY SITS DOWN. A Humorous Story — L. H. ROBBINS — 61
How the publication of Little Willie's essay spilled the beans
ILLUSTRATED by BATES GILBERT

THE MAN WHO FOUGHT BUT ONCE. A Story — HARRY WAIT REYNOLDS — 66
A prize-ring phenomenon has his brief hour of triumph
ILLUSTRATED by HENRY MOCK

IF WINTER COMES. A Serial Story. VII — A. S. M. HUTCHINSON — 73
The Sabres part company and tragedy stalks Mark's footsteps
ILLUSTRATED by L. PERN BIRD

UNDER THE SPREADING CHESTNUT TREE — 82

VERSE, by ROSE HENDERSON, DAVID MORTON, B. PRESTON CLARK, Jr., MARY STEWART CUTTING — 13, 36, 60, 65

WITH "EVERYBODY'S" PUBLISHERS — 3

FRONTISPIECE: Where Beauty Dwells in Deep Retreats — 4
By PARKINSON ART CO.

COVER by D. C. HUTCHINSON

MELVILLE DAVISSON POST

L. H. ROBBINS

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With

EVERYBODY'S PUBLISHERS

Announcement!

With the July number—on the news-stands June 15th—*Everybody's* returns to its old size, the standard magazine size.

This change in size is a frank recognition of the demand by readers for more and more fiction, presented in a book comfortable to handle and to read.

So, beginning with the July number, *Everybody's* comes to you in standard form—containing 192 pages, all fiction save for one or two departments, including the ever-bearing "Chestnut Tree," and a separate section reserved for advertising exclusively.

Besides providing for this marked increase in contents and in convenience of form, the change will allow an earlier delivery to the mails and the news-stands. Hereafter *Everybody's* will be on the news-stands on the 15th of the month instead of the 23rd, as heretofore; that is, the July issue on the stands on June 15th; the August issue on the stands on July 15th, and so on.

Our purpose is to make *Everybody's* in form and in contents the indispensable magazine to all lovers of good fiction, a magazine to which you look forward each month with ever-increasing zest. We are justifiably hopeful of achieving this purpose, for even with the July issue, *Everybody's* will far over-top in circulation any standard magazine in the fiction field.

Your July copy in the new size will be on the news-stands June 15th.

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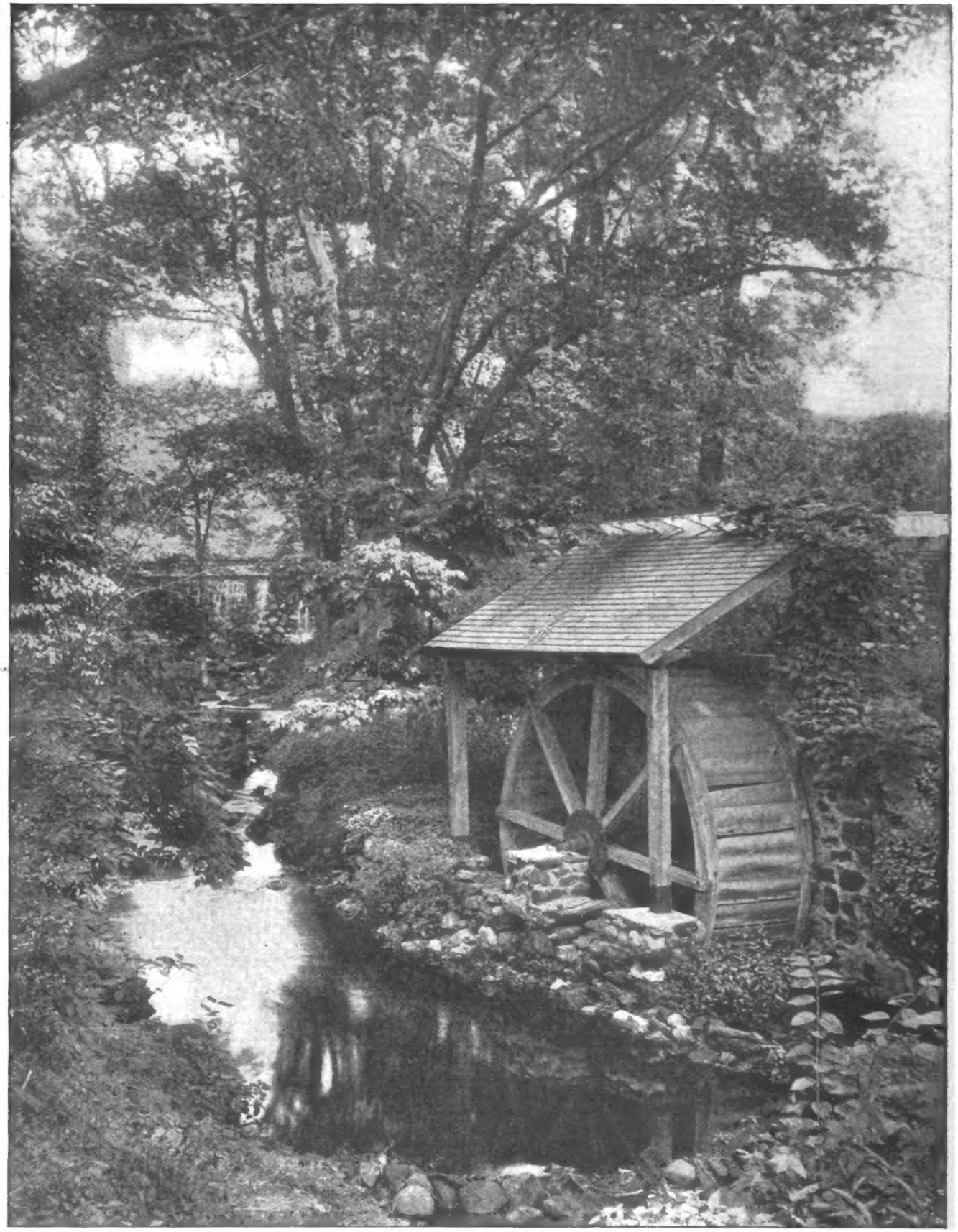

Parkinson Art Co.

Where Beauty Dwells in Deep Retreats.

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Everybody's Magazine

NUMBER SIX JUNE, 1921 VOLUME XLIV

The Silver Box

By Charles Divine

MR. DIVINE made his literary bow to the public as a poet—his book of verse, "City Ways and Company Streets," had considerable popularity during the war, in which the author served with the 27th Division. After being demobilized in France, he spent a year wandering in Spain and North Africa, where he absorbed the local color and understanding of the subtle Oriental mind that are here used to such good purpose.

PEACE and quiet floated like perfumes in Larbaoui's bazaar in the Arab quarter of Algiers. Leaning back against the tapestried wall and shutting his dusk-fringed eyes, Larbaoui listened to the nightingale singing in the rusty cage over his turbaned head. It was hard to believe that just below the window the native life of the city ran tumultuous through its twisting streets, where Larbaoui was known as the Teller of Tales That Freeze the Blood.

His brown hand groped among the brass bowls and jewelry on the counter until he found a phial of amber essence, from which he detached the stopper and touched it to a cigaret he took from a silver coffer at his elbow.

"You think it strange, *sidi*, that I have refused to sell you this silver box with the running gazelles on it. If I were an Arab, I would sell it, but no!" his eyes gleamed with pride, "I am a Kabyle. I honor friendship, and your company is sweeter to me than your gold, or dark-eyed houris. Until your coming my humble bazaar was unadorned. And—" he paused with hushed voice—"only Allah knows what evil spirit lurks in that silver box—for you Americans."

And Larbaoui had begun his story.

II

"ZUT!" It was the colonist speaking, *sidi*, a lean, sun-browned man in riding-breeches who sat at the opposite end of the railway compartment from Blake, the tall young American. The colonist put aside his copy of *La Dépêche de Constantine* to converse with the Parisian doctor. It was an intellectual, much-bearded face, the doctor's, alive with interest at every local curiosity, bent a little over his *Guide Bleue* as he now explained or gesticulated to his chic young wife. Madame Robert, the doctor's wife, still wore the very short skirt which you and I are wont to see on the boulevards of Paris.

Reflect, *sidi*, how railway compartments, the old world over, are like strong drink. They make you either companionable or misanthropic. It was Blake's good fortune—or was it his good nature, *sidi*?—to find that their common confinement had rendered the doctor, his wife and himself decidedly amiable. But the colonist-farmer, who had boarded the train at El-Guerrah, hated the world.

"*Zut!*" he cried out at some remark of the doctor's, "you can't civilize the Arab. You can't even make a friend of him. *Ecoutez, monsieur*, there was a colonist I knew at Figuig, down in the Saharan Atlas along the Moroccan frontier, who had been trading with an Arab for twenty-five years. They were partners and friends—so my friend supposed. But a day came when the colonist was alone with the Arab on a deserted road. He had much money on his person and carelessly turned his back on the Arab, when—crack! *un coup de couteau*, and the Arab had stabbed him in the back."

"*Peut-être*," began the doctor slowly, "perhaps the Arabs would like us better if we treated them more fairly——"

"*Mon dieu, monsieur!*" The colonist flung his newspaper on the floor. "We treat them too fairly. At Batna there was a sister of the convent who went about among the native women doing good, caring for their children, helping the sick. The other day she was brutally slain and left by the roadside. Her murderer was caught—an Arab who said he did it because it was 'the will of Allah.' It is always Allah, Allah, Allah. They say that their god inspires them to commit such deeds. Allah makes them liars, Allah makes them thieves, Allah makes them cutthroats!"

The colonist was in a fury. I do not say that he was without reason, *sidi*—but then I only follow the religion of the Arabs because they forced it on my kinsmen by conquest centuries ago. And I do not blame my sins upon Allah. Do I, *sidi*?

BLAKE, the American, leaned back in his seat, and let the booming and *brrr*-ing of the colonist's voice lose itself in the bumping of the flat wheels, as the train rocked through the level plain. It was more agreeable to look out of the window. It was his first visit to Algeria and he was finding scenes of enchantment wherever he looked—even as you have done. Few painters have ever caught our Algerian atmosphere, that pervasive sense of light drenching every corner of the landscape. Only Noiret, the Frenchman, has captured it—and back in Paris there are sceptics who say there could never be sunlight like that.

But, praise be to Allah! our sunlight exists. Blake had seen it now, and believed it. Later, at the end of the day's railroad journey, he would see the purple mountains and the gateway to the desert, and he would seek out an Arab named Omar ben Amar, to whom a fellow painter had given him a letter. With Omar ben Amar as a guide, he hoped to visit corners of the oasis which he, too, could paint.

Bumping and jolting, the train came to a halt at a small way station. Blake wondered with exceeding wonderment at the

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sunlit spell that hung over everything. Dreams hovered in the still air, penetrating the slow, dignified stride of the few Arabs strolling up and down the station platform, investing their figures with grace and their guttural speech with hidden mysteries. Blake could feel it in the air like a potent magic, bringing with it a hush of expectancy. Ah, *sidi*, have you not felt this sense of impending adventure? It caused Blake to jump to the window to see what was on the verge of happening. But when he gazed from the train, all was calm, still, the countryside bathed in silent gold. And the train jolted forward on its flat-wheeled journey.

Blake took one of his souvenirs from his pocket and looked at it. It had caught his fancy profoundly. It was a metal-backed trinket in the shape of a hand, fashioned with three long fingers in the middle and a shorter one at each side representing the thumb and little finger, but each of the same singular brevity. You know it, *sidi;* the Arabs call it "the Hand of Fatima." I could have sold Blake a better one, had he waited until he came to one of my bazaars before making his purchase. But then, it was not badly done, covered with dark-colored enamels, with a green stone set in the palm.

Suddenly the colonist leaned forward and explained to Blake that Fatima was the daughter of Mohammed, the prophet, and her hand was a charm against the djinn and the evil eye. Superstitious! Ignorant! *Impossible!* That was what the Arabs were. What did they know back in Paris about running the colony? The government was too lenient; it gave the Arabs the same privileges as the colonists; they had made fortunes during the war with their agricultural products, and now they jostled you in the public buildings, and crowded ahead of you in the railroad stations, and jammed into the first-class compartments.

At that moment the train bumped to a halt at Ain-Yagout, and Blake and his fellow passengers heard somebody at the car door. Turning, they watched and wondered who was going to dispute their possession of the compartment.

"*Zut!*" complained the colonist, as the door swung back and revealed four brown faces enveloped in much white linen. "Arabs!"

BUT Blake, as well as *Monsieur* and *Madame* Robert, welcomed the chance of riding at such close quarters with Arab travelers.

Slowly the first brown countenance mounted into the compartment. It was a tall, powerful Arab, with a handsome face and small black mustache; his head was wrapped in a yellow turban, his body swathed in several thicknesses of robes, and he sat down on the same side of the compartment with Blake. Next came three native women. The first was fat and her *haick*, or all-enveloping cloak, was white. The second was slender and her *haick* was black. Both wore veils which extended up from the folds of their *haicks* to the fringe of their lower eyelids, leaving their *kohl*-rimmed eyes peering over the edge.

Blake noted with surprise that the third native woman, who was traveling alone, wore no veil. She was young and lustrous-eyed, slender as a sylph, *sidi*, mounting into the compartment with the grace of a gazelle, wearing no *haick* to impede her movements, but clad in a white-silk robe that fell freely to her ankles, circled with silver bracelets. She was only a slip of a girl, this Moorish maid, with a fine clear skin in which the warm blood of youth mounted to her cheeks as she sat down opposite Blake and met his admiring gaze.

The train started up again with a jerk that threw everybody into conversation.

"The women are of the Ouled Nail tribe," said the colonist, speaking so rapidly in French that the natives could understand but little of what he said. "It is the Ouled Nail tribe that breeds the dancing-girls whose fame has traveled all over North Africa. The two *mauresques* with the Arab across from me are married; one of them is probably his wife. Arabs often marry Ouled Nails and take them away from their occupation of dancing; that is why these women now cover their faces with veils."

THE male companion of the two veiled women sensed that the talk was turning about him, and with friendly intent he produced a paper showing that he was a well-to-do merchant, with many acres of date palms. Then, pointing first to the fat woman on his left and the thin one on his right, he next made a gesture toward his own breast and murmured: "Mine, mine!" Thereupon he smiled with the pleasure of possession.

"*Le vieux diable!*" laughed *Madame* Robert gaily. "He has two wives."

Presently both wives removed their veils, for they were now in a railway compartment where none of their own people could gaze upon their faces. It was evident that Fat Wife was the favorite. Her robes were all of white, her jewels all of gold, and her lord and master bestowed all of his glances upon her. Skinny Wife sat disconsolate in the corner; her jewels were only of silver, her lord and master said nothing to her, and her black *haick* might well have been a robe of mourning.

All the while, *sidi*, the Moorish maid opposite Blake was glancing about her with naïve curiosity, clasping and unclasping her hands in her lap, until lo! Blake's eye discovered a strange tattoo mark on the back of her right hand.

"It is the Hand of Fatima," he said eagerly.

"*Oui, oui, m'sieu!*" She held out her hand for him to examine the tattooing at close range, pointing out with childish pride that she was the only *mauresque* with such a tattoo mark. Others had crosses and crude stars, but she alone possessed the Hand of Fatima on her own hand.

Little by little her timidity vanished as she felt that she was among friendly *roumis* (Christians). She chatted, smiled and laughed, and her laughter was like the music of a shady brook in an oasis. She exhibited her many bracelets and necklaces, cataloging them in terms of French currency and showing that her total value, robes and jewelry, was more than twenty thousand francs.

"*Tiens! Tiens!*" cried *Monsieur* Robert. "At last it has been found—a woman worth her weight in gold."

"Are you an Ouled Nail?" asked Blake. "And you dance?"

"*Certainement, m'sieu.*" She reached into the dusky bosom of her dress and drew out a paper entitled "Bulletin No. 89, *fille soumise*," showing that the bearer, Messaouda ben Zaya, born of the Ouled Nail tribe in the oasis of Bou-Saada, at a date which neither she nor the authorities knew, was journeying to Biskra to dance in the café of Matougui Tahar ben Amana.

"Messaouda ben Zaya," repeated Blake, trying aloud the music of the name. "It is pretty."

Messaouda laughed, and her laughter, as I have said, *sidi*, was also music. Their camaraderie grew as Blake took from his pocket the Hand of Fatima and displayed it, and lunch-baskets were opened, and Fat Wife offered Blake the leg of a chicken, and Messaouda gave him a tangerine, and the Arab merchant passed around a loaf of native bread impregnated with garlic. Blake tried to slip his portion of the bread into his pocket, but Messaouda's keen eyes discovered him.

He was the first American she had ever met. He was like other men, she said, only finer.

"Is it that *monsieur* has a *fiancée?*"

He acknowledged it, whereupon she insisted that he show her a picture.

"Hist!" said Fat Wife, shaking her head gravely at Messaouda. "Be careful."

But Messaouda only laughed, though Fat Wife frowned. After lunch was ended, Fat Wife nestled close to her husband, and they fell to singing love-songs together, while Blake stood up to look out of the car window at a salt lake shining like mother-of-pearl. The doctor likewise came to the window, and Messaouda, too, who first turned to the doctor's wife.

"YOU permit that I put my hand on the shoulder of *monsieur?*"

The request was made in a manner of rare simplicity, and *madame* gave her permission, smiling. But Messaouda had no such qualms about putting her hand on Blake's arm the better to see what was passing outside, for she knew there was no one present of whom it was necessary to ask the right. So she knelt on the cushioned seat beside him, and together they looked at the barren slopes of the Aures mountains, hills flung topsy-turvy as if Allah had tired of playing with such pretty toys.

When the train reached Batna, where tourists descended to visit the city of Timgad and its Roman ruins, Blake noticed that there were Arabs idling on the station platform who frowned upon this Christian familiarity of Messaouda's. As he turned away from the window, he saw one of the results of the jealous guarding of Arab women—intrigue. Fat Wife was taking advantage of her husband's being asleep, rocked by the train and the heat into snoring unconsciousness, to lean to the door and wave kisses to an Arab on the platform, at which Blake and Madame Robert could not restrain their merriment.

"Ssssh!" begged Fat Wife, with a glance at the sleeping merchant. "Do not wake him. There is an Arab proverb: 'Never leave your wife unguarded—even for a minute.' "

"There is another Arab proverb," said the colonist gruffly. " 'Never strike a woman with a feather. Use a meat ax.' "

When Messaouda started up to share the window with Blake again, Fat Wife pulled her back and whispered to her in Arabic. The girl's cheeks reddened.

"She has a lover in Biskra," said the

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She held out her hand for him to examine the tattooing, pointing out with childish pride that she alone possessed the Hand of Fatima on her own.

colonist. "The fat one has just warned her to take heed."

"I'm not afraid," said Messaouda, rejoining Blake at the window.

"They often come to a violent end, these Ouled Nails," commented the colonist. "They are sometimes found murdered in their rooms, by an Arab who has fled with all their jewels." Blake turned around, astonished. "It is true, *monsieur*. The dancing-girl's fortune is her jewels. All that she earns she puts into her bracelets and earrings. Who can blame her? It's a more substantial form of wealth than the dirty paper money the government issues now. It's real gold and silver."

Blake glanced at Messaouda and shuddered. He did not like to picture such a lithe fairy slain by a murderous thief in the night. She was all gentleness and peace and benevolence. She smoothed out a crumpled mass of paper money and flung it to a beggar at the door.

"*Allah la iwerri lek bas.*" (May God bring you no ill), he said, seizing upon the alms.

As the train panted in to El-Kantara, the last mountain village before the desert, Blake felt that strange hush of expectancy throbbing through the air with increasing power. The station stood in a mountain pass whose rocky sides dipped swiftly down to the narrow gateway through which the train passed in order to glide out onto the golden desert. Here was the Sahara, where the flat land unfolded, and an oasis of palm-trees stretched along the sands for miles, bordering a *oued* with a tiny black stream of water flowing between yellow mud banks. Farther away rose mauve and violet hills in that marvelous sunlight which has been the despair of so many painters, except Noiret. Ah, *sidi*, it was a sight worth traveling leagues to see. So concluded Blake, and doubly interesting when glimpsed over the shoulder of Messaouda, looking shyly up into his eyes. He began to believe that the Hand of Fatima was bringing him luck.

"Thou art rash!" cried Fat Wife, pulling at Messaouda's skirt. "Come away

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from the window. It is folly, child!"

But Messaouda laughed defiance at danger, and with a nervous bumpity-bump the train came to its final halt before a station cluttered with Arabs, colonial soldiers, hotel bus boys, and native guides watching for arriving tourists. The passengers were swallowed up in the varicolored multitude of burnouses and brown faces. For a brief moment Messaouda hesitated on the platform, turning toward Blake with her dark eyes gleaming.

"Come and see me dance!"

And she fled like a timid gazelle.

III

BIRDS were singing in Biskra, under the palm and mimosa trees, in that unrivaled winter playground for you westerners, who can afford to play in sumptuous hotels at the edge of the desert. Tourists were swarming, enriching all the beggars, and teaching the bootblacks to say, "Black your boots, sir?" In the modern city Blake saw the first straw hat of the season, and the first white-flannel trousers. But, being in search of native scenes unspoiled by European costumes, he quit the city by the highway passing the busy native market-place. At his side walked Omar ben Amar, like a prince of a proud dynasty.

Omar ben Amar was tall and stately, wearing his cloak with the grace of one born to it. His white turban was bound with brown cords of camel's hair, from which the cloth descended to his shoulders, framing his swarthy countenance and dark beard. His face was well formed, with a strong, straight nose, heavy eyebrows and full red lips. There was just a touch of the over-fullness of sensuality to the mouth below the black mustache, and in the hairy-browed eyes there came at times an inscrutable look, a suspicion of subtlety back of the thick lashes which made Blake think that never would a westerner understand this majestic being who walked so leisurely at his side.

Omar ben Amar professed great pleasure at having been sought out by the American. He had seen him, he said, when he arrived in Biskra, for had he not traveled in the same compartment with Messaouda, who lives in the Street of the Ouled Nails? Omar knew Messaouda. He knew everybody in Biskra, for he was the son of a *kaid*, a native chief, and his family had long dwelt in "the mouth of the desert."

It would give him great joy to show Blake around the oasis, and as for the Hand of Fatima in which he took such interest, Omar would give him a much finer one, a souvenir worthy of *Monsieur* Blake. He had seen, had he not, the gold-encrusted jewels made by the artisans of the Zibane and displayed in the little bazaars they had passed near the market-place? These men were the finest jewelers of the region. It was they who had made the silver coffer that caught Blake's fancy in passing—a box like the one I have shown you, *sidi*, of beaten silver and elegant workmanship. At once Blake thought of his fiancée in America, and determined to buy one of the beautiful little caskets. Omar ben Amar said he would take charge of the commission, and he did, though I would have preferred to have dealt directly with the buyer, for it was to my Biskra bazaar that Omar came to command the silver box.

In the gardens of Bab-el-Darb the frogs were croaking, and into his cousin's crude mud house Omar led Blake.

"You see, my cousin has two kitchens." Omar pointed to one of them, only a hole in the ground where a fire might be built.

"But where is the other kitchen?" asked Blake.

"You are standing on it, *monsieur*."

Blake laughed to himself, and well he might, *sidi*. An Arab kitchen reckons not with your stoves and ranges, pots and pans and a hundred utensils; it is only a blackened hole in one corner of the principal room in the house. From this and other experiences Blake made a number of sketches that day, and returned to his hotel in time to view the sunset from the terrace, and arrange to go to the Arab quarter at night with Monsieur Robert and his wife.

IV

THE crescent moon had scarcely climbed into the softly breathing night, where the stars hang so big and bright over Biskra, when a tumult of native music sounded in the street of the Ouled Nails. Tom-toms were beating and shrill flutes droning their melancholy complaints. Intermittent electric-light bulbs shed a faint glow on the sign-boards of each *café Maure*, on tawny faces thronging at the doors, on the turbaned heads and burnous-clad shoulders of the crowds moving up and down the narrow streets. The lights left in abrupt darkness less-favored doorways, in which a swift hissing sound called an Arab lover to the lintel.

An incense-bearer passed at Blake's elbow with his smoking lamp in his hand, swinging it at shop doors and begging a *sou* for having thus perfumed the spot and banished evil spirits. The heavy odor of the incense floated on the air long after its bearer had passed.

Through the eery-lit lanes came newly arrived tourists pushing their way timidly among the pleasuring crowd of natives. The tourists were bewildered and alarmed by the clamor and jostling, the strange tongues, the Oriental music from curtain-hung doors and the Ouled Nails hanging over their latticed balconies. Cries and shouts, voices deep-throated, as with menace; verily, *sidi*, a caldron of wild emotions seemed bubbling in that fantastic thoroughfare, which might at any moment leap into fire and explosion.

The café of Matougui Tahar ben Amana was already filling up with coffee-drinkers by the time Blake and his friends entered the long room, where huge tapestries hung on the whitewashed walls, and Japanese lanterns were suspended from the raftered ceiling—an attempt to introduce modern decorations for the supposed delight of tourist patrons. Wooden benches were occupied by Arabs who had come to drink coffee and listen to the "Oriental concert." Along the wall at one side of the door a row of benches had been elevated on top of another, to form a loftier seat for the wealthier patrons, the tourists who could be overcharged for coffee. To this second tier of seats a very black Arab conducted Blake and the Roberts and took their orders.

Before him Blake saw a cleared space in the center of the room, where the dancers would appear, and beyond it a raised dais where the musicians sat rasping their Oriental music and splitting the heads of the tourists unaccustomed to it. The musicians sat cross-legged on their platform. The tom-tom beater was swaying with the rhythmic pounding of his palms on the half-drum. With a quill feather the mandolin-player was plucking his strings, and the fiddle-scraper was bending over his bow with black, thunder-struck hair, like the picture of a brigand seduced by a shrieking melody; the flute-player was piping his blown cheeks into brown bubbles that seemed about to burst, and the tambourine-shaker rattled his disk half-asleep.

"I can't believe that four days ago I was in Paris," cried Madame Robert above the savage din of the music. "I wonder where Messaouda is."

A dancer appeared in a gaudy dress hunched up at the hips in the manner of the Ouled Nails. She walked to the center of the floor and paused, waiting for a cadence of the music that should please her. A sigh went up from among the assembled natives, who had been waiting for the *danse du ventre*.

With sudden, convulsive shakings the girl began the dance, in a rhythmic turning of her body on slow-stepping feet, in rapid ripplings of the flesh as she circled before the seated spectators. It was the old primitive dance, *sidi*, which had come down through the years, and which has sent its influence to many lands and under various names, even to civilized New York. Yes, *sidi*, when I took my last shipment of Oriental perfumes to a shop in Fifth Avenue, I saw in your city a relic of this dance which had been introduced under the name of the "shimmy."

But in the café of Matougui Tahar ben Amana, watching the dance, Blake saw back of him two elderly British spinsters who had come to Biskra to let the desert sun work its magic with their cold-blooded constitutions, and who now looked on at the spectacle thoroughly warmed and captivated by a naughty terror. As the dancer vibrated to the increasing speed of the tom-toms, natives rose to their feet and approached her, pasting paper money on her perspiring brow. She danced as long as these tributes were forthcoming, and then suddenly stopped and turned back, sitting down exhausted among a group of other dancers.

FOR a moment the music stopped. The ceasing of it left a throbbing silence on the air. Then a stir of excitement passed down the room as a new dancer was seen wending her way to the stage. It was Messaouda, in a new robe of shimmering silk, slender and graceful. About her brow, on the little head she held so erect, she had bound a head-dress of silver pendants.

A wand of willow, was Messaouda. All the dark-browed eyes followed her movements as she stepped to the middle of the floor, and, commanding new music, seemed to melt rather than move from her static pose into a drifting poem of grace. You see, *sidi*, I have seen Messaouda dance.

"She is the favorite!" cried the doctor's wife to Blake. "Look how the Arabs watch her."

Despite the insistent beating of the tambour, Messaouda put not so much emphasis on the movement of the silver belt at her waist as upon the graceful fluttering of her fingers and the serpentine waving of her

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It was the old primitive dance which had come down through the years, and which has sent its influence to many lands and under various names, even to civilized New York.

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arms. Her dancing had none of the features which so many westerners find revolting in the *danse du ventre*. It was simple and child-like.

A storm of hand-clapping fell on the room as she finished the dance and joined Blake and his friends at their elevated seats, drinking coffee with them and talking. Blake felt self-conscious, as if all the natives were looking at him. When the doctor asked Messaouda which of the roomful of Arabs was her lover, the girl's figure seemed to stiffen, as with fear. Blake could not shake off the feeling that scores of hostile Mohammedan eyes were watching him covertly; he felt a power drawing his gaze to a corner of the café, and, yielding to it, his glance encountered the inscrutable eyes of Omar ben Amar, leaning forward from among a close-packed group of natives.

Omar nodded to him courteously. With Omar was the well-to-do merchant, the husband of Fat Wife and Skinny Wife, who gave him a cordial smile of recognition. At once he felt more at home, and at the farther end of the room he saw Fat Wife herself, chatting with her friends among the dancing-girls, with whom she, too, had found her livelihood once upon a time.

"Wilt thou paint my picture?" asked Messaouda of Blake, when an hour later they rose to go. "We will climb to my terrace on top of the house. Come to-morrow at sunset. The air will be cooler then."

He promised. He had been on the verge of suggesting the portrait himself.

"*Au revoir*," said Messaouda, taking his outstretched hand, after which she lifted her fingers to her lips, in the native fashion.

Blake imitated the action awkwardly, and pronounced one of the few words of Arabic he knew.

"*Salam!*"

Messaouda looked pleased. Around them sounded deep, muffled comments from the folds of burnouses and the beards hidden therein.

V

THE mornings belonged to Omar ben Amar, and the evenings to Messaouda. In this wise did Blake fling a handful of fleet days into the golden desert air. Then he put Omar by, and went on his morning excursions into the oasis alone. No word of complaint came from Omar, although his eyes moved stealthily with an unspoken message. He probably saw the size of his tip diminishing, thought Blake. Omar had brought him the silver box from my bazaar, and, delighted with the workmanship, he had sent it back to have his fiancée's initials added to it.

The afternoons dragged their hot, white lengths through the sweating town, loath to approach the sunset hour when Blake could hurry to the Street of the Ouled Nails and climb to Messaouda's terrace with his easel and canvas. In the pale evenings—seeped with light but pale after the blinding glare of day—he painted her sitting on the terrace. He painted her dusky, moonlit beauty, the silver jewels at her brow, and the tattooed Hand of Fatima on the back of her own hand.

Together they watched the glory of the setting sun. Across the desert sands that stretched between the city and the purple hills to the west he could see a caravan winding along the road that led to Touggourt—and eventually to Timbuctoo and the other side of Africa. The camels moved along with their serpentine necks swaying, undulating over the sands with the weary rhythm of far-away lands. The blood-red sun started on its own night journey below the horizon, and its disk melted into rose color, shimmering like watered silk, with rivers of silver flashing across its surface. A violet sheen crept up the sky from the mountains—and Blake gasped. He marveled at his impudence with paint and brush before the unattainable splendor in front of him.

From the near-by mosque the muezzin's voice came drifting across the terrace roofs, droning its melancholy call to prayer. It was wind-weary, this voice crying: "Only Allah is great! There is no other God but Allah."

But Blake, watching the sunset across the desert, was so gripped by its beauty that he scoffed at the muezzin's summons to the temple. It was sacrilege to exult Allah at this hour and forget the God in the sunset.

When night came Blake would seek out the café of Matougui Tahar ben Amana, where Messaouda fluttered her fairy fingers and silver-circled feet. His figure became a familiar sight there. Sometimes Messaouda would come and sit with him when her dance was ended, and sometimes she sat with native men, the center of an admiring circle of murmurous Arabs.

Something of the Oriental fatalism got into Blake's soul. He told himself that, come what may, he would sit in the café of Matougui Tahar ben Amana, he would make little penciled sketches of the types and changing scenes, and he would talk to Messaouda. If she had an Arab lover who was jealous, let him be jealous! If this lover should stick a knife in Blake's back, let him stick it—and be done with it!

VI

BLAKE'S sojourn among the Arabs of Algeria came to an end all too soon. So, too, with the Roberts, who planned to ride back to the coast with him.

For his last evening in Biskra, which he was to spend with Messaouda, he carried with him to the Street of the Ouled Nails a miniature copy of the portrait he had made of her, as a souvenir. She was enchanted with the gift, calling to her friends among the dancing-girls in the street to come see it, holding it aloft above the circle of their heads and permitting none to touch it.

Then she called to Blake to follow her, and led the way up the steep stairway of the little two-story house where she lived.

"It is a fête day," she told him excitedly. "There will be coffee and cakes on the balcony."

He saw that she must have been at great pains to straighten up her room. The closet shelves at the head of the stairs, where her simple cooking utensils were usually exposed to view, had been covered over with a flimsy curtain. From the landing he passed through a narrow door into the one room that served her as salon, living-room and bedroom, but the bed had been put away. The mattress could be seen rolled up and thrown in a corner under a neat pile of bright blankets. On the clean, tiled floor was a rich rug; along the bare white-washed walls hung a tapestry from Tozeur, with camels humping through the design. Blue camels, *sidi*, and green camels and red camels. Near the many-colored camels hung several of Messaouda's dresses, on ordinary nails driven into the plaster. In one corner was a trunk draped with a lace petticoat for cover—Messaouda's dressing-table, set with mirror, brass candlesticks, a few clay vases, a straw tray woven by the nomads, and a mortar and pestle of solid brass.

A faded pink curtain hung across a door-sized window giving upon the balcony, whence drifted the confused noises of the street.

Such, *sidi*, was the home of this dancing-girl, all the home she had had since her mother died in the distant oasis of Bou-Saada.

SHE stood in front of her dressing-table, in the light of a lone candle, and looked at the painting Blake had given her.

"My eyes, are they so pretty as that?" She laughed, embarrassed. "And wilt thou remember them?"

She picked up the mortar and pestle and began pounding a lump of black ***kohl*** until it had become all dust, whereupon she took a piece of wood shaped like an orange stick and dipped it into the powder.

"At least thou canst remember how I did it." She lifted the stick to her lashes, closed her eyes, and rubbed the ***kohl*** through the fringe of lashes. Then she touched her eyebrows with the stopper of a perfume bottle. "It is jasmine."

He could catch the scent swimming on the air of the room. Never before had he smelled such a delectable odor, at once so delicate and potent, with a power that reached deep down inside of one. The jasmine came from my bazaar, *sidi*.

"Come," she said, "we will sit on the balcony."

She picked up the straw plate and, emptying into it a bag of cakes dipped in honey, led him through the curtained window to the little wooden balcony outside. A latticed railing and canopy gave it an air of privacy, although scarcely a few feet below moved the crowds in the street, and opposite was the rear door of the café of Matougui Tahar ben Amana, not more than fifteen feet away.

"Which dost thou love the best?" she asked. "Tea or coffee?"

When he had answered, she leaned over the balcony. "Hist!" she sissed, attracting the attention of a waiter loitering in the door, and gave him the order. It was wonderfully convenient, this doll-like box of a balcony perched on the side of the house within whispering distance of a café.

Twilight had lingered gently through the narrow street, and now darkness had fallen. With it came the halos of electric light at the door of each *café Maure*, and the crowds forth for the strolling, coffee-drinking and the evening's pleasure. The voices of the night awoke, the throaty talk of Arabs passing and repassing in the dusky lanes, and incomprehensible cries echoing up and down the fanciful cañon.

Blake sat back in his chair and looked over the railing at the slow tide of turbaned heads and white-cloaked shapes. Messaouda's little balcony hung over the street like a dainty lantern.

"What's that?"

A new sound broke on the night air, with arresting tumult.

"The tom-toms are beginning to beat,"

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she said, "and the flutes are wailing."

Again came the sensation of impending adventure, the feeling that volcanic emotions were astir just beneath the surface of the street's movement, and that they might at any moment leap into fire and flame.

"Are you never afraid here?" he asked.

"Never. I am accustomed to it. No one would dare molest me. Even the Senegalese, when wine has played tricks in their heads and worsted their wits, dare not touch me. It is said that I can change a man from woman-hate to woman-love. But of that, how do I know? It is Allah who possesses all wisdom. No, I am not afraid, not even of—" She paused abruptly, and then continued: "But this is thy last evening here. Look how the stars creep low to greet thee!"

Silently a brown hand emerged from the curtains upon the balcony, and the waiter had brought the coffee: small cups of thick black sirup on a gleaming brass tray.

It seemed to Blake that for a moment he had glimpsed fear in Messaouda's eyes, and that her hand was shaking slightly as she placed the plate of honeyed cakes before him. Her hand lingered on the plate as she looked up at him.

"Thou wilt return some day?"

He did not know.

"But thou wilt never forget me?"

"Never, Messaouda, never so long as I see the stars creeping low at night."

She clapped her hands in delight.

"Ah! Thou art becoming Oriental. I shall reward that speech."

Whereupon she took a spray of orange blossoms from her hair and broke a cluster of buds into his coffee-cup. The flowers lay like miniature pond lilies on the surface of the black liquid, and when he lifted the cup to his lips the scent of the orange-blossoms mounted to his nostrils exquisitely.

"DOST thou like it?" She put out her hand.

"You have rewarded me well." He touched her fingers lightly just below the tattooed design. "The Hand of Fatima has brought me good fortune. It has led me to beauty. I think it will always go with me."

She looked at him tenderly. For a long moment she held his gaze to her eyes. When she spoke, there was a tremor in her voice.

"Why dost thou never call me 'thou?' It is always '*vous*, *vous*' when you speak to me in French. But I, I call thee 'thou.' "

The pensive beauty in her face stirred him to his depths. She was a lovely thing, was Messaouda, as lovely as a willow-flower. He could feel her allure, soft, thrilling, and now made sweet with a sudden sadness as he explained to her that he had learned to speak French with the second person plural. It was the fault of the grammars, *sidi*.

She sighed. She was grateful for his companionship, she said; he was a *brave garçon!*

"Others have sought me for my body, saying that it was like a slice of the moon when pearl-fresh, or for my fame as a dancer, but thou, thou stranger from so far over the seas, thou hast marveled at more than that. Thou hast desired to know about my life, my habits and parents, my necklaces and my philosophy, and how I put the black on my eyelashes. Thou hast laughed with me and thou hast been sympathetic." Again a sigh issued from her breast. Gladly would she have lavished her love upon him, but there was fine cleanliness about him, a spiritual *camaraderie* which subtly communicated itself to her and forbade it. And she remembered his *fiancée*. "I know thou dost love her greatly."

Tears came to her eyes, swimming from the lustrous, dark depths. Slowly she took her gaze from his face and, bending over, detached a silver bracelet from her henna-stained ankle.

"HERE we give gifts at parting." She handed him the anklet. "Thou hast given me my picture. I give thee this anklet—for thy *fiancée*, the fair *roumia*."

He toyed with the silver anklet, coiling on the palm of his hand in the pattern of a serpent. It was a souvenir he would always remember, a memory to carry back from this strange country to the land of pavements, limousines, dinner-coats and commerce.

His musing was interrupted by a voice calling from the street.

"Messaouda!"

There was a hurried pattering of feet on the stairway and a moment later the balcony curtains were swept aside by Fat Wife, breathless and excited. She leaned over Messaouda and fell into rapid speech in Arabic, conveying to Blake a sense of unusual emotion. She whispered and then raised her voice in hoarse emphasis.

Messaouda leaped to her feet and faced the other.

"*La-la, la-la, la-la!*" she cried, which Blake knew was "no, no, no!"

But Fat Wife was insistent. She seized Messaouda by both arms and spoke low and convincingly to her, pointing toward the street and taking a step to the balcony railing to indicate something in the slow-rolling tide of brown humanity below.

At length Messaouda nodded and kissed her friend on the cheek, after which Fat Wife withdrew through the curtains. Her footsteps could be heard going more slowly down the stairs.

Blake waited for Messaouda to make some explanation, but she said nothing about Fat Wife's message. The increasing tumult of the tom-toms gave evidence that all the "Oriental concerts" were in full operation in the Street of the Ouled Nails.

Messaouda looked over the balcony and drew back quickly.

"Let us go in," she said, nervously pushing back the curtain for him to enter the room. "Besides, the hour is near for me to go dance in Matougui's café. I must get ready."

It was the hour for Blake to say good-by to her.

She took both his hands and wished him luck and a safe journey.

"May no evil befall thee, dear friend."

He sensed a strained note in her voice, and her hands were trembling as she released him.

"*Salam!*" She raised her fingers to her lips, with the glow of the candle full on her face.

It was thus that he had his last glimpse of her, with a gleam as of starlight in her *kohl*-rimmed eyes, and something akin to terror.

At the head of the stairway he paused, alert.

He thought he saw huddled shapes in the shadows of the street, something that moved and caught a distant illumination on white wool garments and then melted again into the shadows. A hundred fancies flashed through his mind. But he straightened his shoulders and started down the stairs toward whatever lurked there.

At the street entrance he stopped. There was no one there, only the shadows of the dim portal itself. Up and down the street he looked at the swarm of strolling natives, out of which two figures disentangled themselves and came toward him with amiable greeting. They were Omar ben Amar and the merchant who was Fat Wife's husband. Both fell into step at his side and talked to him as they walked out of the Street of the Ouled Nails into the European quarter.

Blake breathed easier.

"They told me at the hotel that you are leaving to-morrow," said Omar. "I am sorry. There are many things you have not yet seen at the gateway to the desert. But I understand, *cher ami*—you travelers must be ever journeying. I hope you will not forget us. I shall come to-morrow to bid you farewell and to bring the silver box. It would have been ready to-day except that the workman was not accustomed to do the additional work you asked. I will also bring you a gift myself, a souvenir I have promised you."

They stopped at the Café Glacier in the principal square, where Blake paid Omar for his services. At first the Arab was loath to accept payment, on the plea of friendship, but Blake prevailed upon him, and after a ceremonious bidding of good evening, he took his leave of the two and entered his hotel.

Passing along the terrace balcony to his room, he stopped to regard the velvet blue of the sky and the many jeweled stars. The drumming and wailing from the Arab quarter penetrated but weakly here, drawn out into plaintive echoes by the soft night wind. He breathed deep of the enchanted night, feeling as if he fain would drink a strong enough draft to tide him over the daylight hours of prosaic days to come. With the dawn of the morrow, and the sun's glare, it would all be changed.

VII

ONE of the first changes he noticed the next morning was the number of Arab servants who suddenly sprang into existence at the hotel with the air of having been constant and devoted attendants upon him. You know these Arab servants, *sidi*. They were everywhere, wishing him a gloriously happy journey with one hand at their lips and begging for a tip with the other, with no apparent loss of dignity. In getting rid of these majestic beggars and waiting for Omar ben Amar to come, Blake was kept at his hotel later than he had intended. It imperiled his chances of catching the train.

What could be delaying Omar, he asked. Inasmuch as there was only one train a day out of Biskra, the Arab certainly knew of the hour of its departure. A sudden apprehension seized Blake: could it be that Omar plotted to keep the silver box and let him go away without it? Was he only

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The Fat Wife leaned over Messaouda and fell into rapid speech in Arabic, conveying to Blake a sense of unusual emotion.

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a common thief? Blake dismissed the suspicion as being unjustified, although he recalled the colonist's denunciations on the train to Biskra.

Still Omar did not come. The hotel omnibus had long since gone to the station, half a mile away, so that Blake at length was forced to hurry out into the square with his luggage and hail a passing bus.

It was the autobus of the Hotel Royal, the most luxurious hostelry in Biskra, and Blake piled in alongside half a dozen British travelers. One of them, who was a lord, was going over an expense account with two elderly ladies. "Twenty francs for each camel, for one day, and fifteen for the guide. That makes a hundred and five. Righto!" Next to them sat a grave-looking man in a pith helmet, and a young English girl who was smoking a cigaret, and discussing an event of unusual interest that had occurred the night before. A dancing-girl had been murdered in the Street of the Ouled Nails.

Blake was startled. The thought of Messaouda leaped to his mind.

The body of the slain Ouled Nail had been found at dawn, said the travelers. Her murderer had not been caught. There was great excitement among the natives in that quarter, and the other dancing-girls were going about weeping and shrieking.

"I suppose she was murdered for her jewels," said the English girl. "I have heard of its being done."

To Blake's mind came the echo of the colonist's words: "They often come to a violent end, these Ouled Nails."

"Oh!" cried out a woman opposite Blake. "I wonder if we ever saw her dance?"

The remark, made with the air of a curiosity-hunter alert for a new thrill, gave Blake a feeling of revulsion. Was the murder of a dancing-girl only another souvenir to be added to one's collection of memories? He would hate to have such a fate overtake Messaouda, and his mind flew back over all the circumstances of their meetings, and the tumultuous mysteries of the Arab quarter at night.

"Does anybody know the girl's name?" he asked.

His fellow travelers looked at him in surprise. No! All they knew was that it was an Ouled Nail.

The autobus arrived at the railroad station and the travelers got out hastily. Shaking off the Arab lads who sought to get in his way begging to carry his luggage for him, Blake made his way to the ticket-window, purchased his ticket and started through the gate to the station platform just as the *chef* announced the imminent departure of the train. Arabs and their ungainly bundles made his progress like an obstacle race.

A hand fell on his arm, and he looked around to find Omar ben Amar at his side.

"I am sorry I could not come to your hotel. But I am not too late to say *au revoir* and *bon voyage*, and to give you the silver box. Were you worried about it?" He handed the package to Blake. "It has been a pleasure to know you, dear friend. Inside the box you will find a little token from me. May it ever remind you of the gateway to the desert."

The station bell began to ring. Blake caught a glimpse of *Monsieur* Robert and his wife motioning to him frantically from a car window.

Hastily he shook Omar's hand and thanked him. Turning, he ran across the platform just as the train began to glide out.

"*Dépêchez vous! Dépêchez vous!*" cried the doctor, holding open the compartment door.

Blake caught at the handle and pulled himself up to the step.

"You almost missed the train," said the doctor, helping him into the compartment and assigning him politely to a seat next to his wife.

"Oh, *monsieur!*" exclaimed *Madame* Robert. "Have you heard the news? *C'est etonnant!* One of the Ouled Nails was killed last night. It made me think of Messaouda."

Blake acknowledged that he had thought of the same thing.

"Ah, it's a curious race, the Arabs," sighed the doctor.

Blake tore the paper wrapping from the parcel Omar had delivered to him and disclosed the silver box, a coffer four inches wide and twice as long, with arabesques on the cover and running gazelles on the side. In the midst of the design were his fiancée's initials.

"Oh, how wonderful!" commented *Madame* Robert. "It is Arab handiwork."

Blake lifted the lid and flung it back, peering into the box. What he saw caused him to start back with a cry.

The doctor's wife leaned forward to look. The moment her eyes rested within the box she screamed and fell forward in a faint.

Gripped, as by some nightmare spell, Blake was gazing into the box with cold horror in his eyes. He was looking at a human hand, small, brown, and severed at the wrist; and on the back of the hand was the tattooed design of the Hand of Fatima.

The Sun God

By Rose Henderson

THE gray dawn reddens, and the freshening wind
Marshals the clouds across the mountain spires.
A light flames skyward where the mist has thinned
Like lifting smoke above old altar fires.
The cañon pines' low murmur, and the hush
Of shifting sands amid dry desert grass,
The far-off chanting of the hermit thrush,
The splash of waters in the rock-strewn pass.

Then the sun's rim above the kneeling hills,
The mounting splendor and melting blue;
The radiant whiteness of the desert fills
With glistening folds the far, notched mount in view.
And gloriously the golden presence thrills
The waiting earth to ecstasy anew.

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The Rider of Golden Bar*

By William Patterson White

Author of "Paradise Bend," "Hidden Trails," "Lynch Lawyers," etc.

II

THE STORY

BILLY WINGO, a popular young ranger who is possessed of a great deal of personal charm, has a modest claim and a small herd of cattle that could easily be developed into a worth-while ranch if he didn't prefer to spend so much time hunting, fishing and generally taking life easy. His lack of ambition exasperates Sally Jane Prescott, a good friend to whom Billy proposes at every opportunity, undeterred by her repeated refusals.

Jack Murray, another contender for Sally's hand, also proposes, offering as a special incentive the promise of the county political boss to make him sheriff. Sally, who detests Murray, refuses his offer with so much scorn that he, enraged, seizes and kisses her despite her spirited struggles to escape. Sally refrains from reporting the attack to her father, because she knows that fatal gun-play would inevitably follow.

Meanwhile, the county political leaders assemble to select a slate for the forthcoming election. Aware of the growing distrust among the voters, who are tired of lawless shootings, cattle thievery and contract graft, the crafty bosses decide to put up a popular and capable citizen for the important office of sheriff, trusting to this candidate's strength to swing the rest of the ticket. They finally decide upon Billy Wingo, who they think can be controlled after election. Jack Murray, happening in at the conference, is sorely disappointed at the choice made.

Billy Wingo, in one of his almost daily passages of pleasant philandering with Sally Jane, casually refers to the honor the political powers seek to thrust upon him and only decides to accept the nomination when she urges him to take it.

Later in the day, Billy and his youthful friend, Riley Tyler, are whiling away an idle hour in the town of Golden Bar when Hazel Walton, daughter of one of the neighboring rangers, appears, driving a pair of mules harnessed to a buckboard. The men admire her skilful handling of the team and are chaffing each other about their studied indifference to the girl's obvious attractions, when a package drops out of the wagon and Billy Wingo hastens to pick it up.

Tyler is indulging in a few harmless pleasantries at Wingo's gallantry when Jack Murray, in liquor and still nursing his grudge against the politicians, passes by, deliberately misinterprets the nature of the remarks and taunts Tyler with cowardice. Both draw guns, but Tyler's weapon catches, whereas Murray's is effective, and the youth drops with three shots in his body, one of them through the back.

Murray immediately leaves town on horseback and Billy Wingo shortly afterward picks up his trail. Hazel Walton, unaware of the shooting, in passing Murray on the road, notices that his horse's nose has been muzzled. Her suspicions aroused, she watches him take up a position in ambush and begin to inspect his rifle, with which he is a crack shot. Fully aroused by this time, and recognizing his purpose, she whips her mules into a mad gallop so as to warn any one coming over the trail. Murray, divining her intent, shoots one of the team, and when she abandons the buckboard to ride the other, shoots the second mule, but Hazel, dashing ahead on foot, reaches Billy just before he comes within range of Murray's rifle.

Chapter Four—(*Continued*)

"LORDY, it's the girl that dropped the package!" exclaimed Billy, dismounting in haste.

He had his arm round her waist in time to prevent her falling to the ground. She hung limply against him and gasped and choked, and sobbed away her varied emotions

"There, there," he said soothingly, patting her back and, it must be said, marveling at the length and thickness and softness and shininess of her midnight hair. "It's all right. You're all right. You're all right. Nothing to worry about—not a-tall. You're safe. Don't cry. Tell me what's bothering you?"

And after a time, when she could speak coherently, she told him.

It was a disconnected narrative and spotty with gasps and gurgles, but Billy made no difficulty of comprehending her meaning. They who can construct history from hoof-marks in the dust do not require a clear explanation.

When he had heard enough for a working diagram he plumped her down behind a fortuitous stone and adjured her to lie there without moving, which order was superfluous. She did not want to get up again—ever.

Billy stepped to his horse, dragged the Winchester from the scabbard under the near fender and trotted to the top of the rise. Arrived at the crest, he dropped his hat and went forward crouchingly, his rifle at trail. Sheltering his long body behind bushes he dodged zigzaggingly across the top of the ridge to an advantageous position behind a wild currant-bush growing beside a jagged boulder.

He lay down behind the wild currant-bush and surveyed the landscape immediately in front of him. At first he saw nothing—then two hundred yards away on his right front a sumac suddenly developed an amazingly thick shadow. He automatically drew a fine sight on that sumac.

The shadow of the sumac became thin. A dark object flitted from it to another bush. The dark object was a man's head. It was hatless. Billy smiled and decided to wait. He understood that he was dealing with a man who could shoot the buttons off his shirt, but on the other hand, Billy did not think meanly of himself as a still hunter. He lay motionless behind the currant-bush and watched Jack Murray's advance.

BILLY smiled pityingly. It was obvious to him that Jack Murray had never been on a man-hunt before. If he had he would have been more careful, much more careful. "It's like taking candy from a child," Billy said to himself.

It was destined to be even more like taking candy from a child.

Four times before the bold Jack reached the crest of the hill he offered Billy a target he couldn't miss. And each time the latter refrained from shooting. Somehow he was finding it difficult to shoot an unconscious mark. If Jack had been shooting at him or had even been aware of his presence, it would have been different. But to shoot him now was too much like cold-blooded murder. There was nothing of the bushwhacker in the Wingo make-up.

Suddenly at the top of the rise, Jack Murray ducked completely out of sight.

"Must have seen the horse," thought Billy, and looked over his shoulder. No, it was not the horse. Billy was on higher ground than was Jack and he could not see even the tips of his mount's ears.

"It can't be my hat he sees," Billy told himself.

Evidently it was the hat, for while Billy's eyes were on the hat, a rifle cracked where Jack Murray lay hidden, and the hat jumped and settled.

"Good thing my head ain't inside," said the wholly delighted Billy, his eyes riveted on the smoke shredding away above the bushes on the right front. "I wonder if he thinks he got me."

It was evident that Jack Murray was wondering too. For the crown of a hat appeared with Jack-in-the-box unexpectedness at the right side of the bush below the smoke. Experience told Billy that a stick was within the crown of the hat which moved so temptingly to and fro.

Three or four minutes later, Jack Murray's hat disappeared and the rifle again spoke.

"Another hole in my hat," Billy muttered resignedly and cuddled his rifle stock against his cheek. "He'll wave his hat again, and then he'll be about ready to go see if the deer is venison."

Even as he foretold, the hat appeared and was moved to and fro, and raised and lowered in order to draw fire. Then, peace continuing to brood over the countryside, the hat was crammed on the owner's head and the owner, on hands and knees, headed through the brush toward Billy's hat.

Billy was of the opinion that Jack

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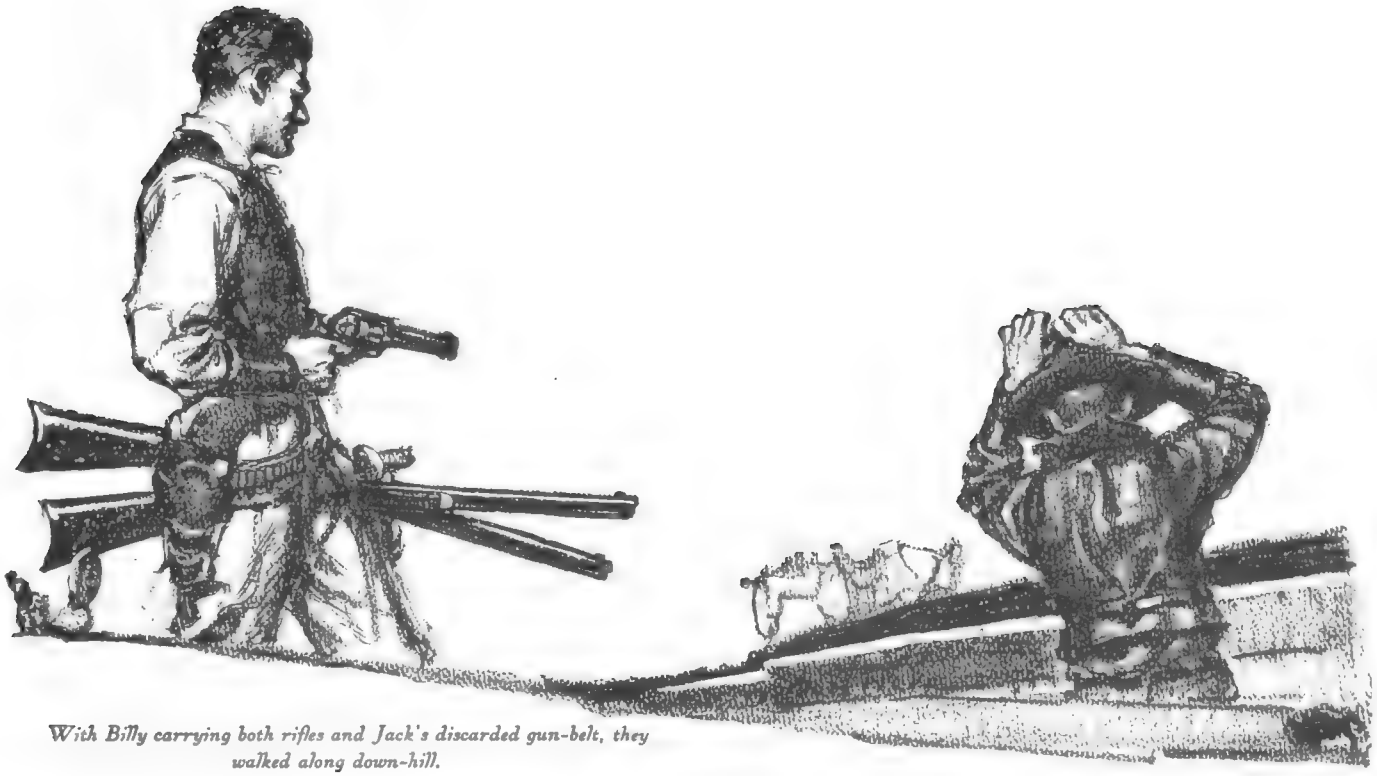

With Billy carrying both rifles and Jack's discarded gun-belt, they walked along down-hill.

Murray's course would bring him within ten feet. He was right. Jack Murray passed so close that Billy could have reached forth his rifle and touched him with the muzzle. Instead he waited till Jack's back was fairly toward him before he said, "Hands up!"

Jack Murray possessed all the wisdom of his kind. He dropped his rifle and tossed up his hands.

"No need to turn around," resumed Billy, Riley Tyler's six-shooter trained on the small of Jack's back. "Lower your left hand slowly and work your belt down. You wear it loose. It'll drop easy. And while you're doing it, if you feel like gamblin' with me remember that this is Riley's gun and I ain't used to it, and I might have to shoot you three or four times instead of only once, y'understand."

Obviously Jack Murray understood. He lowered his left hand and worked his gun-belt loose and down over his hip bone with exemplary slowness. The shock of his capture had evaporated the last effects of the liquor. He was cold sober and beginning to perceive the supreme folly he had committed in shooting a woman's mount from under her.

"One step ahead," directed Billy when the gun-belt was on the ground. "And up with that left hand."

Jack Murray, both thumbs locked together over his head, stepped out of the gun-belt. Billy went to him, rammed the six-shooter muzzle against his spine and patted him from top to toe in search of possible hide-outs. He found none except a pocket-knife which did not cause him apprehension.

"Let's take up the thread of our discourse," said Billy, "farther down the hill. Walk along, cowboy, walk along."

With Billy carrying both rifles and Jack's discarded gun-belt, they walked along down-hill to where Billy's pony stood in a three-cornered doze. It was then that Jack Murray caught sight of Hazel Walton lying on her back behind a stone, her arms over her face. She looked extremely limp and lifeless.

"I didn't shoot her!" cried the startled Jack.

"I know you didn't," said Billy. "The lady's restin', that's all. We'll wait till she feels like moving."

Hazel Walton uncovered her face. There was a large and purpling lump in the middle of her forehead, the skin of her pretty nose was scratched, a bruise defaced one cheek-bone, and one eye was slightly black.

"Your work, you polecat," Billy declared succinctly. "You'll be lynched for mauling her like that."

But Hazel Walton was just. She sat up, supporting herself by an arm and dispelled Billy's false impression. "He never touched me—and he could have shot me if he'd wanted to."

"So kind of him not to," said Billy with sarcasm. "Who *is* responsible for hurting you? Your face is bruises all over."

"IS IT?" she said with an indifference born of great weariness. "I suppose it must be. I remember I struck on my face when he shot the mule I was riding. He—he shot both mules."

"He'll be lynched for that, then," Billy said decisively.

"Who'll pay for the mules?" Hazel wished to know. "We needed those mules," she added.

Billy nodded. "That's so. If he's lynched for this attack on you—your mules—same thing if you know what I mean—you lose out on the mules. Maybe we can fix it up."

"Sure we can," Jack Murray spoke up briskly.

"I'm not talking to you," pointed out Billy. "Whatever fixing up there is to do, I'll do it. *You* have done about all the fixing you're gonna do for one while. Yeah. I came out after you, Jack, to make you a better boy, but now that we got you where you'll stand without hitching, I can't do it. I ain't got the heart. Of course, if you were to jump at me or something, or make a dive for your gun I'm holding, I don't say but I'd change my mind in a hurry. I kind of wish you had seen me back there a-lying under my currant-bush. Then we'd have had it out by this time, and I'd be going back to town for a shovel."

"Don't you be too sure of that," snarled Jack Murray. "Just you gimme my gun back and I'll show you something."

"I'll bet you would," acquiesced Billy, "but I'm keeping your guns, both of 'em. I'd feel too lonesome without 'em."

"Can't you do nothing but flap your jaw?" demanded Jack in a huff. "I'd just as soon be downed outright as talked to death."

"But you haven't any choice in the deal," Billy told him in mild surprise. "Not a choice. You shut up. I'll figure out what to do with you. Y'understand, Jack, I've got to be fair to Miss Walton too. If you're lynched she won't get paid for her team and I can't have her losin' a fine team of mules thisaway and not have a dime to show for it. That would never do. Never. Lessee now. You got any money, Jack?"

"A little."

"How much?"

"Maybe ten or twelve dollars."

"Maybe you've got more. You know you never were good at figures. Lemme look."

He looked. From one of Murray's hip pockets he withdrew a plump leather poke that gave forth a jingling sound. A search of the inner pocket of the vest produced a thin roll of greenbacks. But the bills were all of large denominations.

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"There," said Billy, "I knew you'd made a mistake in addition, Jack. You count what's here, Miss Walton."

He tossed the greenbacks and the heavy poke into the lap of the girl who was now sitting up cross-legged, her back against the rock.

"Sixteen hundred and twelve dollars and sixty-five cents," announced Hazel five minutes later.

"How much did your mules cost?" queried Billy.

"Five hundred and a quarter the team," was the prompt reply.

"Call it six hundred," said Billy briskly. "It's only right for you to make something at an auction thisaway. Strip off six hundred dollars worth of greenbacks and put them in your pocket."

"Oh, I wouldn't feel right about taking more than the regular price," demurred Hazel.

"No reason why you shouldn't. No reason a-tall. Jack's only paying you for the damage he did. He's glad to pay. Ain't you, Jack?"

"I suppose so," grunted Jack.

"There, you see. Take it. Don't make any more bones about it. Your uncle would want you to. I know he would. In fact, he'd be a heap put out if you didn't. Those bumps of yours, now. What do you say to one hundred wheels a bump? You got three bumps and a scratched nose. Which last counts as a bump. In round numbers that makes four hundred dollars. One thousand dollars to you, Miss Walton."

"Here!" cried the outraged Jack Murray. "You're robbin' me! You're takin' every nickel I got!"

"No, I ain't," denied Billy, "and don't go and get excited and put those hands down. Don't you, now. About that money—the worst is yet to come. Young Riley Tyler not being here to assess his own damages, I'll assess 'em for him. You put three holes in Riley. Call it two hundred dollars a hole. That makes six hundred dollars. Just put that six hundred in a separate pile for Riley, Miss Walton."

"I don't mind the man paying for the mules," said Miss Walton firmly, "but I can't take any money for my scratch or two."

Billy looked at her, decided she meant it and said: "All right, put that four hundred with Riley's six. Riley won't mind."

"But I do!" shouted Jack Murray, his arms quivering with rage. "You can't rob me thisaway. By ——"

"NOW, now," Billy cut in sharply, "no swearing. You forget Miss Walton. You're right about the money though. I can't rob you. Miss Walton, dump all that money back in the poke and hand it to him. He wants to go back to Golden Bar and be lynched."

"I got friends in Golden Bar," blustered the prisoner.

"None of 'em will be your friends after I tell 'em what you did to Miss Walton, Jack. There's a prejudice in this country against harting a woman. Folks don't like it. Aw right, get a-going, feller. No, the other way—toward Golden Bar."

A hearty groan wrenched itself from the depths of Murray's being. "Uncle! Uncle!" he cried angrily. "Have it your own way. I don't want to go to the Bar. Take *all* my money and be done with it."

"I wouldn't think of such a thing," declared Billy, "though it wouldn't be any more than right if I did. You're getting off too easy. You'll live to be hung yet, I'm afraid, but I can't just see my way to downing you now and here. No, you divide the money again, Miss Walton. Six hundred for you, a thousand for Riley and twelve dollars and sixty-five cents tobacco money for this gentleman. . . . Don't bother reaching for the money, Jack. I'll put it in your pocket. There you are. Now, Miss Walton, if you'll wait here while I get this citizen started—You've got a horse somewhere, I expect, Jack. Lead the way."

He returned at once to the waiting girl. "Oh, sure I saw him off all right. I don't guess he'll be back for a while—not if he has brains. You know, I owe you a lot, Miss Walton. You did the bravest thing I ever knew a man or woman to do. You gambled your life to save mine. You might have been killed, you know it? And after me getting fresh there in the street, I dunno what to say, I don't."

He knew that he was talking too much. But in the reaction that had set in he was so embarrassed that it hurt.

"Yeah," he gabbled on, red to the ears, "you certainly are a wonder. I—uh—I guess we better be getting back to town. You feel able to ride now? My horse is gentle. Besides, I'll lead him."

It was then that reaction set in for Hazel Walton. As the strain on her nerves eased off, everything went black before her eyes and she keeled over sidewise in a dead faint.

Chapter Five

Jack Murray Objects

"YOU hadn't oughta shot the girl's mules," said fat Sam Larder, shaking a reproving head at disconsolate Jack Murray.

The latter endeavored to defend himself: "I was drunk."

"That's no excuse," averred Felix Craft. "You had no business picking a fight with young Riley in the first place. He's a popular lad, that one, and you ain't."

"He made me mad, setting there in the sun joking with that gol durned Bill Wingo who's gonna be sheriff in my place. Besides I was drunk."

"I saw the whole affair," said Sam Larder. "Bill pushed Riley off the cracker-box, and you had to slur Riley about it. Fool caper."

"I never did like Riley," grumbled Jack Murray. "He's a friend of Bill Wingo's, and that's enough. I figured by downin' Riley and skippin' out and lettin' that stage hostler know where I was going, Bill Wingo would come pelting after and gimme a chance to settle with him all salubrious and private on the trail somewheres."

Sam Larder bluntly called the spade by its correct name. "Bushwhack him, you mean."

"Well, if I did, it's none of your business," snapped Jack Murray with an evil glance.

"Then why make it our business by coming here bellyaching to me and Craft?" Sam Larder wished to know.

"I came to you because I want my money—sixteen hundred dollars that bandit Bill Wingo stole off me."

"He didn't say anything about any sixteen hundred," said Felix Craft, his eyes beginning to gleam. "Tell us about it."

"Yeah," urged Sam. "Give it a name."

Jack proceeded to give it a name—several names and all profane. When he was calmer he gave a fairly truthful account of the financial transaction between Hazel Walton, Bill Wingo and himself.

"And I'm telling you here and now," he said in conclusion, "that six hundred dollars is too much for that broken-down team of jacks. And a thousand dollars for putting a few holes in Riley Tyler is plumb ridiculous. Why, he'll be out of bed in a month. Whatell you laughin' at?"

FOR his hearers were laughing—laughing immoderately. They whooped, they pounded the table, they beat each other on the back till they sank exhausted into their chairs.

Jack demanded again to be told what they were laughing at.

"I'll leave it to anybody if this ain't the funniest thing ever happened in the territory," declared Sam Larder, when he could speak with coherence.

Felix Craft nodded. "Sure is. One on you all right, Jack."

"Aw hell, you fellers can't make a monkey out of me."

"Bill Wingo seems to have done that pretty thoroughly," said Sam Larder with a fat man's giggle.

"I'm not through with him yet," snarled Jack Murray.

"Where's your sense of humor?" grinned Felix. "If you'll take my advice you'll walk round Bill Wingo like he was a swamp. Ain't you had enough?"

"I want my money back!" squalled the indignant Jack.

Sam Larder kissed the tips of his plump fingers. "The money's gone. Can't do anything about it now. Can we, Crafty?"

"Don't see how."

Jack sat up stiffly, his face red with rage. "You fellers mean to tell me you're gonna let me be robbed of sixteen hundred dollars?"

Felix Craft spread eloquent hands. "What can we do?"

"I thought you were friends of mine," disgustedly.

"We are," Sam hastened to assure him. "If we weren't we'd have called in the sheriff long ago."

"What's the sheriff got to do with it?"

"He's got a warrant for your arrest—for assault and battery, malicious mischief, and assault with intent to kill. Besides, the folks hereabout have got it in for you. I wouldn't be surprised if they hang you—give 'em half a chance."

"I know they would, damn 'em, but as long as they don't see me they can't lynch me and they ain't likely to see me here in your house, Felix. But I don't like the idea of that warrant."

"I suppose not," said Felix. "A warrant follows you all over while a necktie party generally stays close to home. And no matter what the present sheriff does I got an idea Bill won't forget that warrant any after he takes office. . . . Yeah, I know, cuss him out by all means, but after all what are you gonna do about it?"

"I didn't think he'd swear out a warrant," said Jack.

Felix tendered his mite. "There's a reward offered, too."

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A warrant was bad enough, but a *reward!* Many people would be on the lookout to earn such easy money.

Jack Murray felt an odd and sinking sensation in the region of his stomach. "How much is it?"

"Only three thousand dollars."

"Only, huh. Only? Who's puttin' up the cash?"

"Riley Tyler put his name down for a thousand and Hazel's uncle, Tom Walton, added six hundred, and——"

"Why, that sixteen hundred is *my own money!*" interrupted Jack Murray.

"I expect so," continued Felix. "The other fourteen hundred was made up around the town."

"I suppose you'll tell me you fellers put it up yourselves," said the sarcastic Mr. Murray, who did not expect any such thing.

"Sure we did," said Felix. "We had to. Bill Wingo and Sam Prescott and Wildcat Simms brought the paper round and we had to sign up. I'll be out a hundred if you're caught, Sam two hundred, Tip a hundred, Rafe the same, and that's the way it went. Even the district attorney chipped in his ante."

Jack Murray was too horrified to speak for a minute. While he wrestled with his thoughts, Sam Larder spoke.

"You see, Jack," said he, "we had to sit in. If we hadn't, everybody would have said we sympathized with you and we couldn't afford that—not with elections coming on. It would never do. Never. You see how it is, I guess."

"Yes, I see," said Jack bitterly. "I see all right. I see you've skun me between you. That damn reward will make me leave the territory for a while."

"Most sensible thing you could do," declared Sam Larder warmly. "We don't want to see you get into any trouble, Jack. You're young. Starting somewhere else won't be a hardship for you a-tall. We'll be sorry to lose you," he concluded thoughtfully.

"You ain't lost me yet," Jack snapped back. "I may pull out for a while, but I'll be back. You bet I'll be back and when I do come back I'll sure make Bill Wingo hard to find."

"Don't yell so loud," Sam cautioned him, "or you may have the opportunity sooner than you want it. You hadn't oughta come here anyhow. You dunno whether you were seen or not."

"And you don't want to get a bad name, I expect," sneered Jack Murray.

"You expect right," Felix Craft said with candid bluntness.

"YOU see we ain't been openly connected with any scandal yet," contributed Sam Larder, glancing at the clock, "and while it ain't daylight yet, still—" He paused meaningly.

"You want me to drag it, huh?" growled Jack.

"We-ell, maybe you'd better," admitted Sam.

"If fifty dollars would do you any good here it is," said Felix, thrusting a hand into his trousers pocket.

Jack Murray spat on the floor. "T'ell with your money. I know who ain't my friends now all right and you can gamble I'm a-going right quick. See you later."

So saying, Jack Murray rose and left them. He was careful to close the door quietly. When he was gone Sam grinned at Felix. The latter broke anew into laughter.

"His own money!" crowed Felix Craft. "His own money offered as a reward! If that ain't——"

But what it was was drowned in the bellowing cackle of Sam Larder.

BILLY Wingo removed his hat and stuck a brown head round the corner of the door-jamb. "Hello, Hazel!"

" 'Lo, Billy," said Hazel Walton, breaking another egg into the mixture of sugar and shortening in the yellow bowl. "Chase that sprucy chicken out, will you, there's a dear."

Billy did not misunderstand. He had discovered that Hazel called any friend "dear." It was her way of showing her liking, that was all. Nevertheless, the appelation never failed to give him a warm feeling that felt pleasant round his heart. He shooed out the marauding and molting Wyandotte, and then sat down on the door-step and regarded Hazel with approving eyes.

And Hazel Walton was undoubtedly good to look at as she stood there behind the kitchen table stirring with a great spoon the contents of the yellow bowl. There were dimples in her pretty elbows that matched the one in her cheek. Billy could not see the one's in her elbows, but he knew they were there. Her eyes were downcast. He thought he had never seen such long lashes. The eyebrows were slim and perfect crescents. The round chin was made for the palm of a man's hand. But her hair—that was what Billy admired most of all. It was so heavy and thick. There was a bit of a wave in it, too. And it always looked neat and tidy. There were never any "scolding locks" at the nape of her neck as there were on other necks that had come under his eye. But he was not in love with her. Oh, no, not he. After his latest turn-down by Sally Jane, he had made a resolve not to fall in love again, ever. But there was no harm in going to see a girl. How could there be? Quite so.

"Your uncle home?" he asked after a cigaret had been constructed and lit.

"He'll be in for dinner," replied Hazel with a swift flash of dark eyes. "And there I was hoping all along you had come to see me."

"I came to see you, too."

"Me too is worse, lots worse. Shows what an afterthought I am. Life's an awful thing for a girl."

"I'll bet it is. For you especially. This is the first time I ever came here that some one else wasn't here ahead of me. Usually a feller has to fight his way through a whole herd in order to say good evening to you."

Hazel put her head on one side and looked at him demurely. "They come to see Uncle Tom."

"Which is why they spend all their time talkin' to you."

Hazel smiled. "I feed 'em. I'm a good cook, if I do say it myself. Stay to dinner, William?"

"Not after that," he told her firmly. "I don't want another meal here long's I live."

"Just you let me catch you sloping out before dinner's over and done with and I'll never speak to you again as long as *I* live. Besides, I want you to go fill the waterbucket for me in about ten minutes, and after dinner I need some help in the chicken-house, and uncle is busy this afternoon. So you stay and be mother's li'l helper, Bill, won't you?"

"Putting it thataway," said Bill, "what can a poor man do?" Here he licked his lips cat-fashion and added: "Is that cake for dinner?"

"Of course not, you simple thing. Here it is half-past eleven and the cake not even mixed yet. I've got a dried-peach pie though. It's outside cooling. And there'll be fried ham, Bill, and corn fritters—the batter's all ready in that blue bowl. Lima beans, too, the last you'll see this year."

"I saw some young ones for another crop on the vines when I came through the garden," said Billy, who was no farmer.

Hazel smiled pityingly. "The frost will kill 'em before they get a chance to ripen. It can't hold off much longer. Do you realize it's nearly October, Bill? We almost had frost last night—would have if we weren't so high. There's been some down in the bottoms already."

"Winter's coming."

"Election will be here first. Uncle Tom says you're sure to be elected. My, how important you'll be. Will you speak to a feller then, Bill?"

"I might. You never can tell. Seen Riley lately?"—elaborately casual.

"Saw him last Sunday. To look at him now you'd never know he'd been shot, would you? He's coming to dinner today—has some business with Uncle Tom."

"Yeah, like the rest of 'em. Fen dubs on the chicken-house. You said I could help you with that, remember."

Hazel nodded. "Here come's Riley now."

"NO," SAID Billy, when Riley, having put his horse in the corral, made as if to step over him. "You stay right here. She's busy. She doesn't want a long, lazy lump like you clutterin' up her nice clean kitchen. Sidown on the step next mine. I don't care how close you sit."

"But I do," returned Riley, seating himself opposite his friend. "Last time I sat next you I lost my tobacco. Good thing my watch wasn't on that side."

"Shucks, that watch!" Bill said scornfully. "It was good maybe when your grandad had it. It must have cost him two dollars easy."

"Alla same that's a good watch." Riley returned tranquilly. "It only loses thirty minutes a day now since I had it fixed. Say, Hazel, lemme throw this jigger out, will you? He's only sliming round to mooch a bid to dinner."

"I've asked him to stay," smiled Hazel, "but I don't remember saying anything about it to you."

"You didn't. I said I was coming. Here I am. What's fairer than that, I'd like to know? As I was sayin' before you interrupted, I saw you out ridin' last Sunday."

"Did you?" indifferently.

"Yeah—with that nice old Samson man."

"He's not old," Hazel denied vigorously, "and anyway he's nice."

"He gives her lollypops," Riley confided to Billy, "and sometimes as much as a half-a-pound of chalklet creams. Oh, he's a prince."

Hazel stamped a small foot. "It wasn't

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half-a-pound. It was—it was—" Her voice dwindled away.

"Say a pound," offered Billy entering into the spirit of the thing, "and that's a generous estimate."

"Almost as generous as Samson," grinned Riley. "Hazel, go easy on the poor old feller. He can't afford to be givin' you expensive presents like that."

"Sure not," slipped in Billy. "Why, I don't believe Samson makes a bit more than fifty per cent. on everything he sells."

"You two think you're smart, don't you? He's a nice man, Mr. Samson is, and he spends an evening here quite often."

"He never spends anything else," said Billy.

"Cheap wit," flung back Hazel.

"Almost as cheap as Samson" tucked in Riley.

Hazel's eyes were beginning to sparkle, and Billy seized his opportunity. "Here, here, Riley, stop it! Don't you lemme hear you making any more slurs against Mr. Samson. He's a friend of mine, and——"

"Oh, you!" cried Hazel, instantly regaining her good humor. "You're as bad as Riley, every bit. But you almost did get a rise out of me. I don't like to hear my friends run down."

"I didn't mean it—anything," said Riley with well-feigned humbleness. "I like Samson, I do, the poor old good-for-nothing lump of slumgullion."

Billy shook a sorrowful head. "Honest, Hazel, I'm ashamed of you, robbing the grave thataway."

"I don't believe he's much over sixty, Bill," said Riley.

"Say sixty-one."

"He's forty-one, if you must know," Hazel said.

"I knew it was getting serious," mourned Billy. "They're exchanging birthdays. We'll have to find us a new girl, Riley."

"Not me. I'm satisfied. I'll stick to the last shout and a li'l beyond. Hazel's only fooling these other fellers. I'll make her the best husband in four counties and she's the girl that knows it. Don't you, Hazel?"

"I'm not that hard up," replied the girl, with a smile that belied the harshness of her words.

"There, you hear?" chuckled Billy. "Now you'll be good, I guess."

"IF you won't have me for the twenty-fourth time hand-running, why not take Bill here? He's a good feller, don't drink much, and he's got a heart of gold and a brand of his own—six horses and one calf at the last round-up. Besides, if all that ain't enough, he's gonna be our next sheriff. What more could a girl want?"

"She'd want him to ask her first," said Hazel, not a whit put out.

Riley turned to Billy in mock surprise. "Ain't you asked her yet, Bill? Shucks, whatsa matter with you? You make me sick, and she don't like it either. G'on—propose. I'm with you. We all are. And she expects it, can't you see? G'on, Tommy Tucker, sing for your supper."

But Tommy Tucker firmly refused to sing. Instead he seized the jibing Mr. Tyler by the ankle and skidded him off the step.

"Ow-wow! You poor flap!" bawled the erstwhile humorist, who had picked up a splinter. "Leggo my leg, or I'll roll you!"

But it was Riley Tyler who was rolled, and rolled thoroughly.

"You boys stop that!" directed Hazel, appearing in the doorway with a bucket. "Acting just like overgrown kids! You ought to be ashamed! Bill, I'll take that bucket of water now, and Riley how about fetching in an armful of wood for your auntie?"

The two men started to obey, but stopped short in their tracks.

Billy cocked a listening ear. "Wasn't that a shot?"

"Down the draw," responded Riley.

"Near the Hillsville trail," was Hazel's opinion. "There goes another, and another."

"It's no hunter," declared Billy. "I can hear horses galloping."

Within five minutes they saw a horse come galloping. He was tearing up the draw. The man on his back was half turned about in the saddle, a rifle at his shoulder. He fired. They could not see what he was firing at. There was a bend in the draw concealing what was behind him.

BUT they could hear the galloping of the other horses quite plainly. The drum of the racing hoofs grew louder. Three horses swept round the bend in the draw. They were followed by two others. The pursuers uttered a yell as they sighted the house. The pursued fired twice without effect. There was a crackle of shots from the five horsemen. Apparently none took effect on either the pursued or his mount.

Billy regarded the pursued's mount with critical eyes. "That horse is about done."

"Yeah," acquiesced Riley. "Not another mile left in him."

It was but too evident that the horse was in distress. He rolled a little in his stride. Once he stumbled. The rider caught him up with a jerk. The man turned a desperate, determined face toward the house in the draw ahead of him. He was not fifty yards from the house. The draw was wide. He sheered his horse to one side. The animal staggered, crossed his legs, and turned a complete somersault. The rider flew from the saddle, turned over in the air and struck hard on his head and right shoulder. The horse lurched to his feet, and stood trembling. The man lay still.

The pursuing horsemen were coming along at their tightest licks, but it was Billy and Riley Tyler who were the first to reach the fallen man. Hazel, kilting her skirt in both hands, had run with them.

Billy stooped and turned over the sprawled-out citizen. The man, a square-jawed youngster with a stubby brown mustache, lay breathing heavily. His sunburnt skin was a little white. Hazel pushed Billy to one side, and sat down beside the young fellow.

"Let me," she said quietly, and took his head in her lap. "Riley, get me some water quick and the whisky bottle on the shelf over the fireplace."

Riley darted toward the house.

The five riders dashed up and flung themselves from their saddles. They were Rafe Tuckleton, Jonesy, the Tuckleton foreman, Ben Shanklin and two more of the Tuckleton outfit. Billy faced them, his thumbs hooked in his sagging belt.

"Caught him!" Rafe ejaculated with satisfaction, striding forward, his men at his heels.

"He don't look shot any," said Jonesy.

"Not a hole in him," Billy told them. "He'll be all right in a minute."

Tuckleton laughed harshly. "He's due for a relapse about a minute after that, Jonesy, get your rope. That spruce up there on the flat will be fine."

Hazel uttered a gasp of horror.

"What do you expect to hang him for, Rafe?" demanded Billy.

"Caught him branding one of my calves," was the ugly reply. "Reason enough?"

"I don't believe it!" cried Hazel.

"You know him?" Rafe inquired contemptuously.

"I never saw him before in my life. But he doesn't look like a rustler. He's got a good face."

The Tuckleton outfit was moved to mirth.

"A good face!" yelped the fox-faced Ben Shanklin, slapping his leg. "A good face! That's a fine one!"

"I expect we'll have to turn him loose, boys," Jonesy said sarcastically, returning from his horse, and shaking out the coil of rope.

"Oh, I guess we'll string him up all right," Rafe said with confidence.

"Don't let them, Billy!" begged Hazel.

Billy made instant decision. "'Nds up!"

Which command was backed by a six-shooter trained on the center of Rafe's abdomen. The way the Tuckleton hands flew upward and locked thumbs above the Tuckleton hat was gratifying. But the Tuckleton face was empurpled with rage.

"OF COURSE," remarked Billy, "one of you may hit me, but if I go Rafe goes with me."

"It's all right, boys," Rafe assured his hesitating followers in a voice thick with anger. "Lemme argue this thing."

"There'll be no hanging here," said Billy.

"You bet not!" chimed in the voice of Riley Tyler from a position thirty yards distant on the right.

Riley had returned with the water and whisky. He had been sufficiently thoughtful to bring with him a double-barreled shotgun. He stood, the firearm held level with his hip, the blunt twin muzzle gaping at the Tuckleton outfit.

"Hazel," said Riley, "I wanna borrow this shotgun for a few minutes. I found it leaning inside the door. Ben, I wish you'd come over here and take this water and whisky to the lady. I'm stuck here sort of."

"You go ahead, Ben," said Billy. "Don't lemme detain you."

Ben went slowly. He plumped whisky and bucket on the ground beside Hazel and then began to sidle casually toward the house.

"You come right back," urged Riley, gesturing with the shotgun. "The best place for you is right beside Jonesy. He's gettin' lonesome for you already, ain't you, Jonesy?"

Jonesy spat upon the ground. Ben slouched back to his comrades. While this byplay had been going on Tuckleton had been talking at Billy.

"Would you mind repeating all that?"

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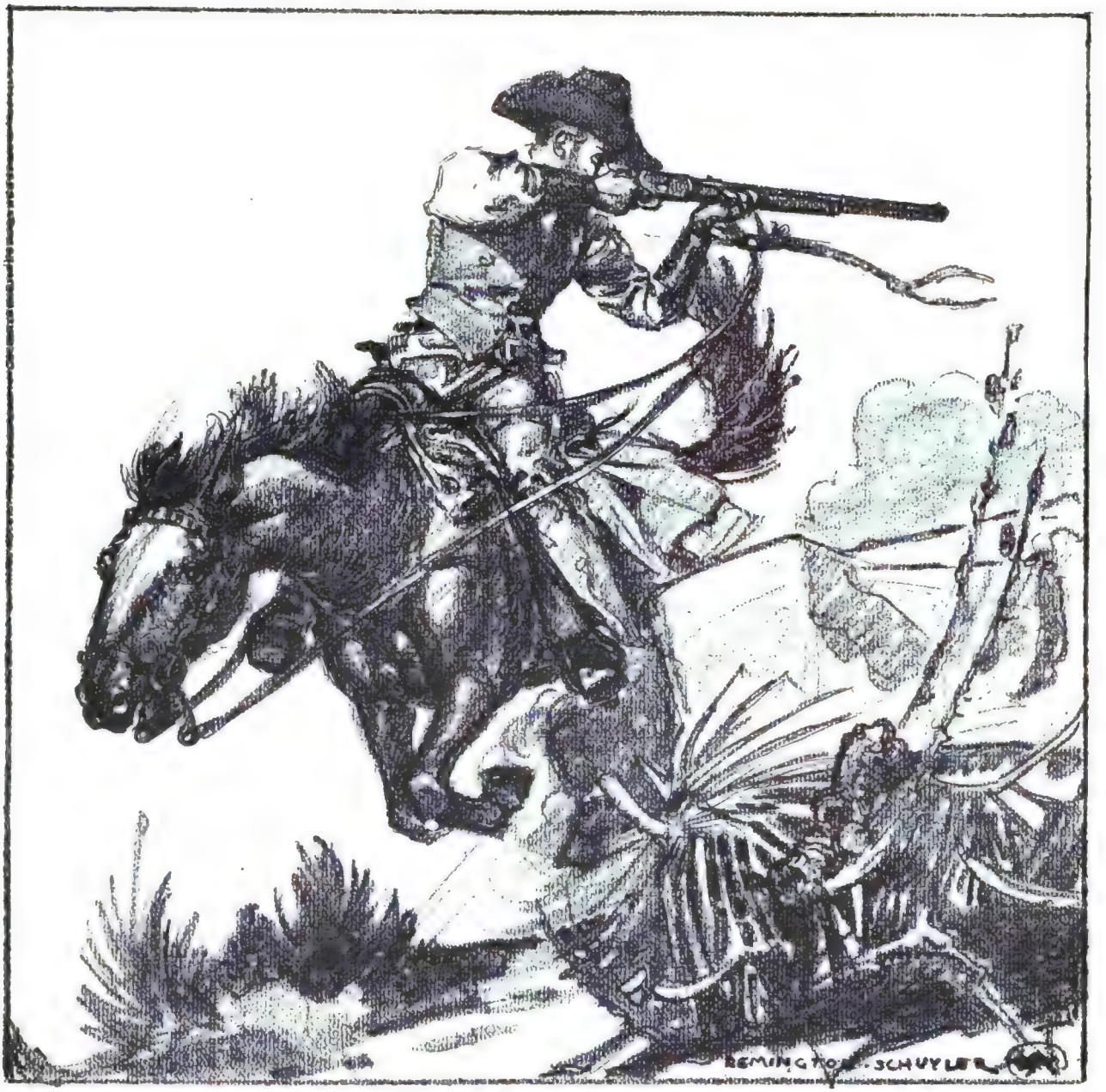

They saw a horse come tearing up the draw. The man on his back was half turned about in the saddle, a rifle at his shoulder.

said Billy, when Ben had rejoined the group at Rafe's back. "I didn't catch some of it."

Tuckleton glared, his little eyes hot with rage. "I said that man's a cow-thief and we're gonna stretch him!"

"But you said that at first," pointed out Billy. "And I said 'no' then. I haven't changed my mind."

"Since when have you been dry-nursing rustlers?" snarled Rafe.

"I don't know he's a rustler."

"I said he was, didn't I?"

"You said so, sure. But you might be mistaken."

"I don't make mistakes like that. And, anyway, all my boys here saw him branding that calf."

"We sure did," corroborated Jonesy. "Feller had a fire all lit, and was heating a running-iron when we jumped him."

"Did the calf have its mammy along?" was Billy's next question.

No one answered. Billy, however, did not remove his eyes from Rafe's face. The pause was becoming almost embarrassing when the five Tuckletonians made reply with a rush. Two of them said "Yes" and the other three said "No."

"There seems to be a difference of opinion," said Billy. "Don't you *know* whether the cow was along?"

"She wasn't along," declared Jonesy, sticking to his original assertion.

"But Rafe said she was," said Billy.

"I made a mistake," Rafe hastened to assure him.

Billy nodded in triumph. "Then you do make mistakes. I always knew you did. Funny how you and Jonesy saw things so different and all. Ben didn't see any cow either, and Tim Mullen and Lake did."

"MAYBE we made mistakes, too," said Mullen sullenly, taking his cue from his employer.

"How about you, Ben?" persisted the questioner.

Ben looked furtively from his employer to his foreman and back again before answering.

"Speak up, Ben," directed Billy, "speak up. You did or you didn't. Yes or no?"

"Maybe I made a mistake," was Ben Shanklin's final decision.

"They seem to have come over to your point of view, Jonesy," Billy observed dryly. "How about you? Did you make a mistake too?"

But Jonesy was not to be caught. "The cow wasn't along. I oughta know."

"You don't need to be so fierce about it. I was just askin' questions. If this feller had a fire and was heating a running-iron I suppose he had a calf handy."

"I said we caught him *with* a calf," insisted Rafe Tuckleton.

"That's right, so you did. Was the calf hogtied?"

"Naturally."

"And when you saw this stranger and jumped him, I suppose you came boiling along right after him?"

"Sure did." Thus Rafe Tuckleton.

"None of you stopped anywhere, huh?"

"Why no, of course not. It wouldn't be reasonable, would it, if we were

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chasin' him to get off and fiddle around?"

"No, it wouldn't be reasonable," admitted Billy. "Then if none of you got off to turn the calf loose, the calf must still be there—calf, fire and running-iron?"

Rafe looked a little blank at this. So did the others. Jonesy was the first to recover his spirits.

"Unless somebody else turned it loose," suggested Jonesy brightly.

"But the fire and running-iron will still be there."

"Of course they will," Rafe Tuckleton declared heartily. "Of course they will. But it just occurs to me that this man may have had a friend with him we didn't see. And that hogtied calf and fire and running-iron—that last may have been a cinch ring, Bill—are evidence that'll hang this man. Jonesy, suppose now you ride back to the fork of that split draw south of Saddle Hill where we saw this man's fire, and see that nobody destroys the evidence before we get there. Ben, I think you'd better go with Jonesy."

"No," said Billy decidedly. "Jonesy and Ben will stay right here."

"Remember," called Riley, "that this Greener is double-barreled."

"But see here—" Rafe began desperately.

"No see about it," interrupted Billy. "You'll all stay right here with us till Tom Walton gets here."

"But suppose somebody destroys the evidence," worried Rafe.

"I don't guess they'll destroy all of it," said Billy cheerfully. "You see, Rafe, we want to go with you to the fork of that split draw south of Saddle Hill."

Rafe's blazing eyes were fairly murderous. His men muttered behind him. But they made no hostile move. They realized that Rafe would never forgive them if they did. He would not be able to.

In the mean time Hazel had been alternately bathing the senseless one's forehead and dribbling drops of whisky between his teeth.

"He's coming round," she said suddenly.

The man opened his eyes, groaned, grunted, and sat up. He blinked his eyes rapidly several times and smiled pleasantly at Hazel.

"That was a jolt I got," said he. "Is that whisky in the bottle?"

He took a long and healthy pull, drove in the cork with the heel of his hand, wiped his lips and then seemed to see Rafe Tuckleton and his men for the first time.

"I seem to remember those bandits giving me the chase of my young life," he remarked, nodding his head. "I don't know why. I don't know why my unknown friend with the six-shooter and my other equally unknown friend with the scatter-gun are holding them up, but I'm glad they're doing it. Still, why? Why all this fuss and these feathers?"

"I don't know either," replied Billy, continuing to watch Rafe Tuckleton and his men like the proverbial hawk, "but we hope to find out. When a couple of friends of mine get here we aim to find out."

Chapter Six

Cross-Purposes

". . . and my name is John Dawson," said the stranger, "and I'm on my way to visit my uncle at Jacksboro."

"Uncle! Jacksboro!" exclaimed Jonesy. "Pretty smooth and thin."

Tom Walton took no notice of Jonesy. "Where'd you work last?"

"Cross T in Redstone County."

Tom Walton nodded. "Turberville ranch? Left ribs cattle, left shoulder and jaw horses?"

"No, Tasker's," corrected John Dawson. "Left hip cattle and horses, no jaw brand."

"I know," said Tom Walton gently. "I knew it was Tasker's. I had to—be sure."

"Whatsa use of this gassing?" demanded Rafe. "I tell you, Tom, we caught this feller branding one of my calves, and I'll gamble he's the boy's been doing all the rustling on your range, too."

"YOU might be right. I don't know. But he tells a straight story."

"They all do. He's a rustler. Take my word for it."

"But he said in the beginning," objected Tom, "that he never was near that split draw."

"We saw him, I tell you!"

"All right. Soon as we eat we'll all ride over to the draw and take a squint at the evidence."

"What for? Ain't my word enough?"

"I don't believe in gamblin' with a man's life," said Tom smoothly.

"Better to be sure than sorry," said Billy.

"I won't be sorry none to hang him, the cow-thief!"

"If I had my gun I'd argue that with you," remarked the prisoner pleasantly.

Rafe was understood to damn all creation. Oh, he was wild.

"Dinner!" called Hazel from the kitchen door.

"Too bad the sheriff ain't here," grumbled Rafe on the way to the house.

"It is too bad," Tom Walton flung over his shoulder. "But I sent Roy for Sam Prescott. He'll meet us on the Hillsville trail."

Roy was the half of his outfit. The Walton ranch was a little one. Even in big seasons Tom could not afford to employ more than three men. In winter he let them all go. What little work there was to be done he managed to do himself. Small rancher though he was, Tom Walton was not a nonentity in the community. Folks trusted him. He was known to be honest.

After dinner the whole party, excepting Hazel, took horse and rode down the draw to the Hillsville trail. Rafe and his outfit would have ridden to the trail at once. But Billy Wingo carefully shepherded them from it.

"We'll keep off the trail," said Billy. "This Dawson man says he's never been off the trail till he got chased off by you fellers. We may want to examine that trail for tracks later."

The Tuckleton men muttered and swore, but they kept away from the trail. Soon after the party reached the vicinity of the trail, Roy, Sam Prescott and two of his men trotted into sight. Billy rode to meet them and turned them from the trail before they reached the spot where John Dawson said he had left it.

Sam Prescott listened in silence to the respective stories of Rafe Tuckleton and John Dawson. He seemed unimpressed by either. When he had heard all they had to say, he dismounted and examined the hoofs of Dawson's horse. Then he and Riley, closely followed by the others, rode along the edge of the trail scrutinizing the tracks upon its dusty surface.

"Here's where he says he left the trail all right," observed Bill. "You can't mistake the point of that near fore shoe. He says Tuckleton and his boys rode at him from over yonder, but if they chased him allaway from that split draw like they said they did, there wouldn't be a single track here. They'd all be on the other side of those cottonwoods."

He jerked his thumb over his shoulder toward said cottonwoods growing about a hundred yards to the south.

"Let's go over yonder where he said they came from," said Sam Prescott.

They all went over yonder. There they found the tracks of five horses. Not only that, but in a near-by depression behind some red willows they found where five horses had stood a considerable time.

Sam Prescott picked up in turn the hoofs of every Tuckleton horse.

"These five horses were standing here at least two hours," remarked Sam Prescott, staring at Rafe.

The latter said nothing. Really, there was nothing to say.

Led by Sam Prescott and Billy the party followed the tracks of these five horses back to the trail and into the draw leading to the Walton ranch.

"You see," said Billy to Sam Prescott. "Those horses were coming on the dead jump. It's just like Dawson says. They were chasing him."

Although Billy's voice was loud enough for all to hear, none of the Tuckleton outfit took it upon himself to deny the statement. It may be said that they were growing a trifle discouraged.

"LE'S go to the split draw," resumed Billy when Sam Prescott had openly agreed with him. "Maybe we'll find that calf and the fire and the running-iron. But I expect that fire will be out by this time."

"I guess likely." Thus Sam Prescott, and turned his horse.

But they did not find the calf and the extinct fire and the running-iron. There was nothing in the split draw even remotely resembling any of these.

"Come to think of it," said Rafe, weakly attempting a last defense, "maybe it was another draw."

"Maybe it was," admitted Sam, turning to young Dawson. "Maybe it was, but I'm satisfied it wasn't. It was a good thing for you, young feller, Billy Wingo and Riley Tyler were on the spot when your horse fell."

"I know it," responded young Dawson heartily. "I'm not forgettin' it. And maybe I can return the favor some bright and sunny day. Now if I can have my gun I'll just have a word or two with the man you call Tuckleton."

"No words," said Sam Prescott firmly. "Not a word. This thing has gone far enough. There'll be no shooting round here. Rafe and his outfit are goin' home now and you're riding with me back to Tom's ranch. And to-morrow morning I'll see you off to Jacksboro. Rafe, I don't want to hurry you——"

Rafe Tuckleton and his outfit took the hint.

"And you mean to tell me they can get

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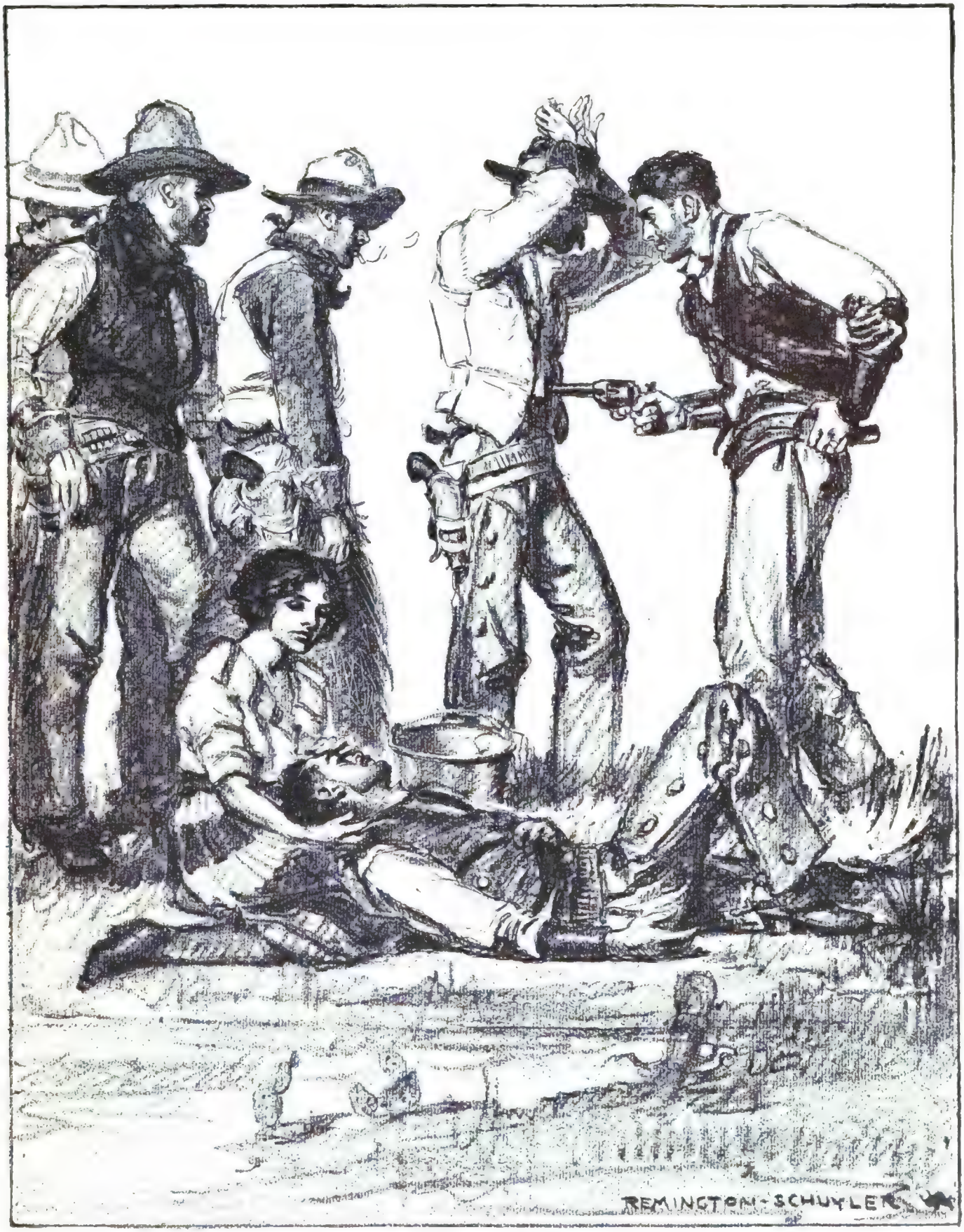

The way the Tuckleton hands flew upward and locked thumbs above the Tuckleton hat was gratifying. But the Tuckleton face was empurpled with rage.

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away with a deal like that?" demanded John Dawson.

Sam Prescott smiled wearily. "What could they be arrested for—always supposing you could get the sheriff to arrest 'em, which he wouldn't."

"Well——"

"There y'are. Of course you could call it attempted assault. What's that? Under the statute, a week in jail. And who'd convict 'em?"

Tom Walton laughed bitterly. "You don't know this county, Mr. Dawson. Anything can happen here."

"Seemingly it can," said Mr. Dawson in frank disgust.

"You see," said Rafe, "I'd figured we'd have to find somebody to lynch for rustlin' so that infernal Tom Walton wouldn't be suspectin' us alla time. Shindle ran across this Dawson party in Hillsville, and guessed he'd fill the bill, he being a stranger and all."

"So Skinny rode ahead and let you know he was coming, huh?" queried Sam Larder.

"Yeah. Oh, confound the luck! Who'd have expected Wingo and Tyler to be at Walton's?"

"They did put a crimp in your plans sort of," assented Larder.

"And now Tom Walton is more suspicious than ever," contributed Tip O'Gorman.

"I can fix that Wingo, though," snarled Rafe Tuckleton. "He'll never get elected sheriff now."

Tip smiled. "Won't he?"

"No he won't he!"

"That's just the thing will cinch his election. I'm gonna play it up strong in the campaign."

"What! Why, he tried to show us up!"

"And succeeded in doing it according to your tell. That's all right; Rafe, you were a little too raw, you know. I've cautioned you about being more careful. You wouldn't take advice and you'll have to take your medicine—this time. I'll explain matters to Bill, where you stand and everything. You'll find it won't happen again."

With which Tuckleton was forced to be satisfied.

That night Tip O'Gorman had a long talk with Billy Wingo. Tip did not tell him all he knew by any means. Such was not his custom. To understand Tip one had to do a deal of reading between the lines. But when Tip went home, he carried with him the belief that Billy understood perfectly the desires and aims of the county machine and would be a willing worker.

Billy sat looking up at the ceiling for a long time after Tip had gone. Finally he laughed silently.

"Tip, you're an old scoundrel," he said aloud, "but I can't help liking you, just the same. I hope I don't have to step too hard on your toes."

Chapter Seven

Rafe's Idea

"TELL you what, Jonesy," said Rafe, "this ranch needs a mistress."

Jonesy laughed as at a pleasantry and continued to talk of the mischance in the matter of young Dawson.

"I mean it," interrupted Rafe, wagging his head. "I'm tired of living single."

"Well," said Jonesy, "you can always get some petticoat to live with you for a while."

"I don't mean a floozie. I mean a sure-enough lady like."

"Oh, one of *them*, huh? I dunno, Rafe. I married a good woman once, and take it from me they sure cramp a feller's style."

"It depends on the woman. There are women and women. If a feller is careful who he picks he don't run a bad chance. Me, I got my eye on young Hazel Walton."

Jonesy looked his astonishment. "Her?"

"Why not?"

"After this Dawson business?"

"Why not?"

"She wouldn't look at you."

"Don't you fool yourself. Why wouldn't she look at me, I'd like to know? I got money. She could wear good clothes and have help in the kitchen. What more could a woman want?"

JONSEY shook his head. "This Dawson business has queered you there, and you can bet on it."

"Oh, that's easy explained—to her."

"H-m-m-m, well, maybe so. I dunno, she looks to me like one girl who knows her own mind. And there's Tom Walton who don't like us, either. You gotta think of all these things."

"I have. The more I think of it the more I think she'll do."

"Funny you never noticed it before. She's been around with her uncle several years now."

"I never even gave her more'n a short look till I seen her holding that Dawson man's head in her lap; and then stickin' up for him the way she did. I tell you, she looked mighty handsome."

"She's a lot younger than you."

"What's a few years between man and wife? Besides I ain't so old. I ain't forty yet."

"You will be next year, and I'll bet she ain't twenty yet."

"She'll last all the longer."

It was mid-morning next day when Hazel was making butter that a rap sounded on the kitchen door.

"Come in," she called, continuing to turn steadily the handle of her box-churn.

It was Rafe Tuckleton who opened the door and walked in. Hazel's eyes narrowed at sight of the man. Rafe Tuckleton! What on earth did he want?

"Uncle's out," she said shortly.

"I didn't come to see him," explained Rafe, with a smile he strove to make ingratiating. "I came to see you."

"I don't know what you can want to see me about."

"I have my reasons," said Rafe vaguely.

Hat in hand he started to sidle to a chair.

"Don't they have any doors where you live?" Hazel inquired sharply.

"Oh," Rafe wheeled hastily and closed the door. He set a trifle to the young lady's account. He was not accustomed to being talked to this way. The snip!

He gained the chair at last, sat down, crossed his legs and crowned a sharp and bony knee with his hat.

"Yeah," he intoned, pulling one horn of his crescent-shaped mustache. "I come to see you." It never occurred to him to offer to turn the churn-handle for her. In his estimation women were made for the especial comfort and delectation of men. Why put oneself out? Quite so.

Hazel continued to turn the handle in silence.

"Makin' butter?" was Rafe's next remark.

"Not at all," Hazel replied sweetly. "I'm washing blankets."

As humor it was not subtle. But neither was the man subtle. He laughed aloud and slapped his knee.

"Pretty good. Got a tongue in your head, ain't you?"

Again he pulled his mustache and favored her with what he conceived to be a most fetching leer. He succeeded in making her yearn to hurl the churn at him.

"You've seen me," she said suddenly, raising her dark eyes to his face. "Why not move right along?"

"That's all right," he said easily. "You're only mad at me account of that business the other day. Nothing at all, that wasn't. Just a li'l mistake. We all make them. You mustn't hold it against me."

"But I do hold it against you!" she cried vehemently. "You tried to murder him!"

Rafe raised a bland hand, palm outward. "Not a-tall. You've got it all wrong. I might have known you would. Women never do get things straight."

"I got this straight all right, and you might as well know I haven't a bit of use for you, and I don't want you in my kitchen. So there!"

"Now listen, li'l girl," he said persuasively. "You don't understand me a-tall, I tell you. I may look hard—a rough diamond, but I'm the pure quill underneath, and I like you."

Hazel was so surprised that she stopped churning. She stared at him, saucer-eyed, her mouth open.

RAFE nodded his head at her. "Yeah, I like you. I have liked you a-uh-long time. And I've got a proposition to make you. How'd you like to marry me?"

Hazel's expression registered immediate distaste. "I wouldn't like. Not for a minute. No."

Rafe considered it necessary to more fully explain matters. "I mean marry me all regular and go to live at my ranch. You wouldn't have to work hard. You could have the washin' done, and have help in the kitchen. I'm a mighty easy feller to get along with too, once you get to know me."

"I don't want to get to know you!" Hazel had resumed her churning, but her negation was no less decisive.

"I'd be good to you. Give you all the dresses and fixings you want—in reason. Say, I'd even have one of these cabinet organs of yours packed in for you. New furniture, too—in reason. I'll be generous. I've got money, and I'd sure be willing to spend it on a girl like you."

"You needn't bother."

He removed his hat from his knee, uncrossed his legs and dropped the hat on the floor. He propped his hands on his knees and surveyed her, his head on one side.

"You don't know what you're refusing," he told her. "Marry me and you won't have to work like this. Nawsir. I'm a rich man, I am. Here, let's talk it over."

He rose to his feet and came toward her. She promptly reached behind her and possessed herself of the singing kettle.

(Continued on page 88)

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"I must write the truth—as if I were making a statement for the press, and then I will disappear."

Wise or Otherwise

By Nalbro Bartley

A JOB hunter who comes qualified to do anything from gardening to psychoanalysis might be expected to disturb the poise of even so worldly-wise a mortal as old Doctor Bellamy. The kindly physician takes him in charge, however, only to become involved in a predicament started by a lady whose occupation is even more singular.

"I CAN do gardening or psychoanalysis," the applicant told Doctor Bellamy, "whichever Quimby most desires."

Doctor Bellamy snapped his fingers for Dammit to come and be petted, a sign of sparring for time.

His caller had waited during office hours until the waiting-room was emptied of its troubled pilgrims. When the doctor appeared, heeled by his grizzly old dog, he discovered this small, shabby person with a wrinkled face and a youngish smile.

"My name is Lance Weaver," the caller began awkwardly. "I'm looking for work. At the hotel they said you filled the need of employment agency as well as a Red Cross station and a community center, so I've dropped in to see if anything was wanting to be done."

The doctor offered a cigar, noting that a beefsteak was what Lance Weaver needed most of all. "What can you do?" he asked without further preliminaries, and was answered by the unexpected—

"Gardening or psychoanalysis."

"I'm afraid Quimby does not want to be psychoanalyzed," the doctor answered; "we don't go in for complexes—that sort of wild oats. I'll inquire about gardening, however."

The little man kept rolling the cigar between the palms of his hands. "Doctor Denton's Nerve-Rest Sanitarium is here," he urged. "I thought there might be——"

"It is only for the helplessly rich or conveniently demented," the doctor explained. "I'm seldom called up there. The place originally was an estate named Castlecrest, owned by a war-made millionaire who turned miser and sold it to Denton. He turned it into a de luxe hotel for heavily incomed neurotics. As I believe in two main cures—calomel and faith—I am not welcome at their gates. Besides, any one who took psychoanalysis seriously would have no chance. The wife of a long-dead friend of mine, Mrs. J. Pitt Blackstone, is there for treatment. She has with her an astonishing companion psychic, Madame Marie Marcella from Nowhere, as nearly as I can judge, who is bent on hypnotizing the entire outfit—an intellectual high-binder trying to convey the impression she has so much happiness she doesn't know what to do with it, and keen enough to realize that most of us prefer having our worst side appealed to!"

"Perhaps I'm an intellectual high-binder," protested Mr. Weaver; "wait until you've heard me out. I'm a psychology professor on my sabbatical, prepared to outrage every precedent by ceasing

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to be a starving savant and become a well-paid servant. I must feed my family—educating them is not sufficient. There are three children—and Mary. There was still romance in Mary's heart when she named our first child Beatrice. The second one she called Matilda! The boy is Lance, Junior, by courtesy. Three children and a wife, faculty standards to maintain—the world gone mad and my salary increased a hundred dollars a year—not enough to pay for their shoes. I am trying not to be afraid of the word radical, do you see? To no longer murmur I am a vegetarian, but to admit I'm unable to buy a beefsteak unless I stop being one of the unprotesting poor and earn a living wage."

The pleasant smile was supplanted by an unexpectedly fierce expression, the doctor's cigar being reduced to shreds.

"Um," said the doctor, "so you don't plan to return to the department?"

"HARDLY. I'm out for conquest, not culture. I chose Quimby because of the sanitarium with its neurotic prey. I want to analyze them for fifty a head, supply egotistical thrills without end—if it will support my family. But I can't give lectures on fear consciousness and emotional thresholds when Mary haggles with a huckster to obtain the largest squash, or does a surreptitious wash, knowing she must call on a new faculty man's wife in shabby attire. It has taken years to realize I'm selfish to stay in the game because I happen to like it while my wife fades and sacrifices. Yet it is a common experience for faculty wives. Before the war and this mad age, living a hundred miles an hour, we managed somehow, bargains did exist and so did low rents and grocery specials and the children were at the nursery age, and our wedding-presents had not turned shabby. But for the last four years we have faced want without abject poverty, and Mary is breaking under it. I've come to where I consider it must be grand to be a common—a carefully chosen adjective that: grand—grand to be able to neglect pronouns because you don't have to neglect paying bills."

"You have been living a sort of under-the-bowl existence," commented the doctor.

"Exactly, and now that I've crept out, I'll stay and become a radical."

"Where are Mary and the children?"

"Mary is listening to her prosperously married sisters pity her as they give her old-style clothes, while the brothers-in-law strut about and debate what style car they will order at the next automobile show. That sort of atmosphere. She is to visit relatives all year, help with the sewing and housework. We sent the boy to school by the aid of a scholarship, and much truckling. The older girl is in the freshman dormitory—her clothes comprising every decent thing Mary had—and the younger one is with a philanthropic aunt. We rented the house, and left a few well-bred bills behind us. I told Mary I'd try my pace in the outside world, and she said she would try not to think she had put a halo around intellectuality and fancy it had been love! That was the first bitter thing she ever said—if I can help it, it will be the last." His head drooped shamedly, conscious he was talking too frankly with a kindly old doctor who probably thought him a bore.

Doctor Bellamy knocked the ashes from his pipe and laid it aside. Slipping the worn gold ring from a finger of his right hand to one of his left, indicative that his sympathies were on the stranger's side, he said slowly: "The only time you can be positive about a thing is when you know little of it, therefore I'd say the big job before you is to make Mary take back what she said about having mistaken intellectuality for love. Your world will never go right unless you do."

"Mary's an odd sort," the professor continued in desperation; "she always looks reproachful when she's in the wrong herself. Was carefully trained by her father, who was a minister, to consider herself a sort of ladylike idiot. Does annoying things, such as always knocking at my door before entering; tries to manage me by crying when all the time she is matching her wits against mine but thinks it would never do to admit it. She is a beautiful woman, a fine, dominating presence, would look well in black velvet and pearls and old lace, that sort of a personage. Yet she has spent her life being a 'boiled' hostess wearing an apron over a hand-me-down frock. Sometimes I think she could outdo me in being a radical, only having the three children on a tenement income and in an intellectual setting, has killed her sense of self-esteem and her humor and her courage——"

"Dear me, you are all in a bad way," commented the doctor.

"I'm the greater coward of the two, but I'm trying to cure myself. From a book-ridden professor whose wildest stunt was to say witty things at faculty meetings, I shall become a radical. I'm willing to cut grass or set out tomato-plants until I see my chance to be an intellectual highwayman. Can't you see the possibilities of being a consulting psychologist with this slogan on a gilt-lettered sign: 'Are YOU Getting All That Is Coming To YOU?' It would draw them like a poultice, wouldn't it? I'd buy a real house and a car and we could have steaks, and the girls could have dancing-frocks, and Mary could have a maid and learn to play bridge—while all I'd do would be to preach the 'Be glad or the gladiators will get you' doctrine. With my credentials—" he stopped suddenly, confused by the doctor's steady eyes.

"THERE are two kinds of pain," Doctor Bellamy said apparently disconnectedly, "the kind that you realize is going to hurt, and hurt hard, and you say, 'All right, doc, go ahead,' and you endure it quite dramatically. Then there is the indefinite sort, which may start any moment and last forever; or it may never start, yet you become a wreck because of the mere dreading—isn't that so?"

"Quite."

"That is what you have been doing, dragging along, dreading to make the break. Now you are out for spectacular surgery, so to speak, jump from the loved and respected ranks of professorship into the camp of the successful quack. It hurts you—but you want it to hurt you and hurt you hard—and then heal."

Eccles interrupted them to tell the doctor there was a telephone call for him and to lift an interrogating eyebrow in the direction of this lengthy caller. Was he to stay on and on? Was the doctor to show more maudlin weakness and advise Eccles to advise Ellen to lay another place for him and also get the spare room ready?

Evidently he was. "Tell Ellen I'm having a friend stay overnight," the doctor ventured timidly before he answered the call.

He returned to lead the way into the softly lighted "keeping-room" and establish this treasonous professor in an old leather chair, a tattered hassock at his feet.

"That was a call from Mrs. Blackstone at the sanitarium," he said, "she wants to see me in the morning—perhaps she has decided to start dying again, although she says Madame Marcella is a 'sea of sunlight.' I heard yesterday that Madame Marcella was wearing Mrs. Blackstone's diamonds—you see, it pays to be a quack." He watched his guest closely.

"Sorry I didn't happen about here sooner," the professor suggested.

"There are other sanitariums, we always have plenty of neurotics the same as there are always large freshmen classes. I wouldn't worry about *that*."

"I like this room," Weaver said incoherently, rising to scowl at the family portraits, "mind if I roam around? I feel unpoised—its hard to sit still or concentrate. This being a super-hobo with three children and a wife scattered about, and the university expecting me to be gathering knowledge for the next year is rather trying. Perhaps I'll not stay overnight, I can go back to the hotel as well as not."

"OH, DO stop with me," the doctor urged; "I'll drive you up to the sanitarium in the morning. After I talked with Maggie Blackstone, I talked with the superintendent and they happen to want another outside helper."

The professor looked like a child caught in mischief and hardly glad of it. "An outside helper," he repeated.

"I took you at your word—not as lucrative as a head waiter or a consulting psychologist, but it will pay forty a month and your keep. It will give you a new view-point, and perhaps a chance to study Madame Marcella and her methods. Try it a month and see—you may have a change of heart."

Eccles announced that supper was ready.

After the professor had demolished his steak and was approaching his third cup of coffee, the doctor ventured a new tactic.

"Have you anything else in mind if this psychoanalysis should fail?"

Weaver dropped his spoon with a clatter. "How did you know?"

"I don't—that is why I'm asking," the doctor tried to look innocent.

"I didn't know you were a seer," he tried to laugh but it had an annoyed sound. "Well—yes, I've something else in view—only Mary would not want it."

"Would Mary want to go on doing washings and pretending you were vegetarians?"

"I don't know," he admitted, "Mary believes that women deserve to have divided time as well as divided skirts if they like. She wanted me to stay on in the department if I'd let her step out—that was the trouble. Of course I could never do it—I couldn't be quite that bad a failure."

"She wanted to work for her own money?"

"Thought it was quite the thing, now

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the children are grown. Despite her tears and her orthodox belief in hell, she has a great head for figures and they've wanted her in the bank in our little town. She wanted to try it, to take a real job, as it were—as if her husband had deserted her or played the races and lost every cent of his salary—that would be quite right for the wife of such a man. But I've always given Mary my salary check and let her dole out my spending-money. When she saw how such a notion hurt me, she gave it up. Then I saw how wrong I had been to stay in the professor game. I decided to make the break. One of our men in the mathematics department went with an automobile concern—he clears his six thousand a year—two more have gone to start cattle raising. I tell you this rebellion among the professors is spreading. All we ask is a wage equal to that of the city scavengers!"

"Quite right."

"The tragedy of pennies warps the soul," the professor waxed enthusiastic. "Take Mary's last humiliation—she has been getting a ten-per-cent. discount in town for many things, her father having been a minister. Before the last faculty reception she went into a beauty parlor—reckless, wasn't it? But she wanted a shampoo and a cold-cream facial, and all the fixings women long to have. So she had them—and when she asked for a ten-per-cent. discount, she never thought how cheaply humorous it was. To her worried, tense mind it was a legitimate chance to save twenty-six or twenty-seven precious pennies. Of course the plumber's wife and the butcher's wife, who were having a water wave and a marcel wave at the time, overheard her request with malicious glee—a splendid little story to circulate because they did not understand the tragedy of pennies. So the story was repeated about town until even the children were twitted with it. I've come to believe a college professor and his family, with the present wage scale, ought to have the temperaments of cold fried eggs if they are to be content."

"Why not lay your troubles before the trustees?"

"TRUSTEES are helpless—the founders tied up the money so that it can be expended in equipment but not salaries—and we're all loyal to the institution—it isn't that we are greedy for money to put away in a bank, it is just that we must live and live decently in order to teach our best."

Somehow the doctor made it impossible to continue on the subject during the rest of the evening. No matter how the professor outlined his intentions or half-way pitied himself for having undertaken gardening work, Doctor Bellamy changed the topic to trout fishing or Esperanto, or suggested a game of chess or showed him old hunting prints he was intending to have framed whenever he came across more money than he had use for. He inquired of this pathetically muddled professor, whether his idea of God was naught but a lazy monism or a virile transcendentalism; and if he believed *vers libre* had come to stay; and why was it efficiency seemed such an abominable word; and what was his opinion as to the authorship of the Odyssey?

In due time the professor was escorted to bed and into the lavender-scented confines of the four-poster where many bewildered, weary guests had spent happy nights. Yet it did not seem an unusual situation as he lay there, a stranger in a stranger's house—with the job of assistant gardener confronting him on the morrow. He wondered how this old, yet capable doctor managed people with apparently little effort. It reminded him of the way Mary gained her point, only Mary stooped to employ that feminine weapon—tears.

He fell asleep far sooner than he had intended, wondering why there were no full-fledged villains in the world, why one could not, presto-change, become a wholly wicked, daring personality instead of remaining a good-bad combination. What a class-room debate that would be—what would Sprague, his prize student, say on the subject—he remembered the veritable riot of words when they argued whether it was harder to say no than yes; how Sprague valiantly held to his point while the other keen, plastic minds gave battle to his statements.

WHAT a glow that memory gave this treasonous professor, a glow followed by a memory of going home to find Mary in tears because they had to have a roast for Sunday dinner instead of a flank steak, due to some one from out-of-town arriving uninvited—and her back ached—and she had decided to take the girls' hats, as well as her own, and buy coloring preparation and do them over in new shades, they must be made to go another season.

Whereat that tight-band feeling had come about his head, and the joy of the recent class-room debate, and the plans for the paper he was preparing to write about the necessity of having occasional "sprees"—had faded, and he had dutifully kissed Mary, and told her a roast usually lasted half-way through the week, and that her daughters and herself had such charming faces no one ever bothered to look at their hats. Then he had gone into his shabby study to figure for the thousandth time his debts and assets. only to fling away pad and pencil and plan for this personal revolution.

The professor wakened to find Dammit sniffing without his door, and a heavenly odor of bacon and coffee penetrating the lower floor.

At the breakfast table, the doctor, checking off his calls, glanced up with a nonchalant, "Morning—I'll drive you up to your new job as soon as we have finished, no doubt you'd like to become located."

"Of course," agreed the professor.

"Haven't changed your mind?" the doctor went on, writing.

"Not yet," his guest admitted naively, "I don't intend to work as a sub-gardner long—as you say, I may find a moment or two in which to study this Madame Marcella's methods. If I can't become an intellectual charlatan for the neurotic rich, I'll take the only other course."

"Which is?" forgetting to check his calls.

"Accept the editorship of *The Radical*—that anarchistic, labor-agitating, yellow journal—write the lectures for the folks who go about trying to stir up trouble—they would pay me well. I'd be like a renegade Roman priest who is always in demand on the lecture platform. I know the rock basis arguments against this anarchistic trash—I've preached and taught them, yet they have not netted me a living wage. Now then, if I can't go about massaging the souls of the wealthy and that sort of drivel, I'll resort to the reverse side of the shield because I know the arguments which could apparently sustain these idiots of rebels. They know that I do—I'm a fat prize for them, a staid professor who has stood out against every turbulent, drastic thing they have attempted. Oh, I've not accepted the editorship yet, I want to try the other first. The other wouldn't be half the harm, to my way of thinking.

"I don't want to start into overthrowing the government business if I can get my family decent living conditions otherwise. But I'm through starving because I happen to be a hopeless intellectual, a philosopher. Just as no man is as well qualified to write of society as the butler, so no man is as fitted to be press agent for the American Bolshevists as he who for the best years of his life has been pledged to the task of helping youth find the sane, middle pastures—" he pushed his chair back from the table—"I must stop thinking out loud or you will notify the Federal authorities to come and get me."

"Dear, no," the doctor assured him lightly, "I think the bravest person is he who admits he is wrong or afraid—the brute type, coarse and nerveless, boasting of chest measurements, a showy animal who can stand a blow and grin, is often the welsher if the test be varied or prolonged. Whereas a coward's nervous frenzy, such as you are experiencing, often serves to force heroism into action. After you've cut the grass a few times and seen this Marcella person play her game, I'm thinking you may revise your plans."

"Being a comfortably established bachelor makes it easy for you to outline other's destinies—" Weaver protested.

"SOME one has to be as lonely as a prairie graveyard so they can take a real interest in some one else," reminded the doctor, "I don't intend to notify the Federal authorities nor warn Madame Marcella you are out to steal her plunder—I'm going to believe that you will find the right way out of a wrong situation."

The professor was not satisfied with this belief. "Don't you believe in the injustice of the thing—not alone for me but for hundreds like me? Have you never thought how unfair this world has grown?"

The last bite of the doctor's toast received a topknot of marmalade. "I know there are two kinds of persons: those who have things and those who have nothing; those who can do things and those who can do nothing. Now, usually those who can do things, justly, are those who have things and vice versa. But eternal transition, with its inevitable injustice, makes it so happen that some of those who have things can not do things, and some who can do things have nothing—and naturally the big row starts. If you call objecting to that state of affairs Bolshevism—I'm one of you. But here is where we differ: both you philosophers and agitators put it all on technical grounds, whereas I choose to put it on human ones. I've discovered if you work out each personal problem on human grounds, you usually become justly circumstanced, but if you fall back on impersonal, vague theories and unjust violent deeds, the answer is chaos—just the same as a good cook does not rely on a cook-book but on what she happens to

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The next night Dr. Bellamy discreetly absented himself from his own keeping-room.

know best suits her needs." Whereat the doctor finished the marmaladed toast, and made ready to drive his guest to the sanitarium.

II

INTRODUCING the professor to the gardener, the doctor parked Dammit without the massive front doors which had been converted into the revolving variety, and made inquiries for Mrs. J. Pitt Blackstone. He was informed she was having a mental treatment with Madame Marcella, and he found himself ushered into the sun-parlor where Mrs. Blackstone was absorbing "harmonious rays." She was a hopelessly obese personage approaching the seventies, almost bald of head while a coquettish blond wig reposed on a near-by wooden block. She had petulant features, this pathetic old person, and a series of double chins while her china-blue eyes were red from frequent weeping spells. Her pudgy hands were crossed over a high peak of a lap, and a lap-dog, Poupée by name, basked on a cushion at her feet. A box of chocolates stood on the medicine-stand in company with occult pamphlets, a mirror, a fan, a rouge box and framed photographs of her two late husbands and her intended third, who had died a week before the wedding date.

Seated beside Mrs. Blackstone was Madame Marie Marcella, devoted companion, sister soul—what not. It was the first searching look the doctor had had at this despised person, having painstakingly avoided her, from the moment Maggie Blackstone confided to him that she had found "an angel to brighten my darkest hours."

It was hard to condemn this interesting-looking woman who, despite her avowed soul science which she wafted toward any one who wafted a check in return, had just such a fine, dominating face as this professor-man's Mary might have, whose gray eyes sparkled with humor and whose hands, although wearing borrowed gems, betrayed the fact that they had done actual toil.

"I shall make a new will, Peter," Mrs. Blackstone began, tears to the front, "I can't tell how much longer my poor old bones will hang together. Last night I had another sinking spell—but my angel Marie," patting Madame Marcella's hands affectionately, "never slept a wink—she suffered with me, so unlike horrid nurses who argue with one, shake up the pillows, and leave you to toss in despair."

"If you would diet and exercise," urged the doctor grimly.

"You can't comprehend me, Peter, I've given up thinking you could. It is your having known and helped my sainted Lemuel that makes me lenient of you—otherwise I should have sued you for malpractise and brutality long ago," grasping her fan, and panting in troubled fashion.

Madame Marcella interposed. "I wouldn't agitate Mrs. Blackstone," she murmured, "she's so very highly organized. I've been trying to get her into mental harmony ever since last night—she would finish off half a pound of brandied cherries," her eyes avoiding the doctor's.

"May I ask," the doctor was on tiptoes, "what are your qualifications, credentials, just who you are?" trying to work himself into a rage, yet liking this imposter all the while.

"The same brutal materialist he always was, my love," sobbed Mrs. Blackstone. "I assure you I did not send for you to have you insult my twin soul——"

"I am quite able to answer," urged Madame Marcella, facing her questioner, "I am a soul surgeon. In previous lifetimes I have been a physician, a priest—I have brought with me into this reincarnation my acquired knowledge, and in addition I have been given spiritual power. I am competent to treat the soul which governs all physical ills. I——"

"I thank you," the doctor waved a hand, indicating utter contempt.

"If she leaves me, I shall die," protested Mrs. Blackstone.

"You are thinking of doing so?" the doctor glanced meaningly at Madame Marcella's borrowed jewelry.

"Mrs. Blackstone has been more than generous," she began so quickly that he knew it was an untruth, "she even wants to leave me half of her fortune—the rest to be divided between yourself and Poupée," the gray eyes twinkling, "but this I can not consent to. It would antagonize her relatives, involve me in a legal tangle, and give me hampering riches which would prevent me from doing my best work. Money is not my goal," she spoke so rapidly the doctor had hard work to catch the words, "Mrs. Blackstone has many years of life and happiness before her, and she must think well before she leaves her money to a stranger——"

"I'LL cut the Arkwright tribe off without a tuppence," screamed Mrs. Blackstone, "I'll not leave the Lowdens a farthing nor my wretched nephews who haven't the grace to write me once a year—let them sue! Who should have my money but those I love—who do I love more than this dear mystic?" turning to Madame Marcella with a bewitched air of dependence, "I insist upon doing it—and I shall leave you enough to keep the wolf from the door, you never saved a penny, did you? A good thing Lemuel never paid back his loan from you—you'd have squandered it years ago." Tears prevented further speech.

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The doctor nodded. He recalled the time, some forty years ago, he gave his savings to his best friend, Lemuel, who invested them and evolved a fortune, always neglecting to repay the loan. He thought, also, of the time he fought in vain for the life of Lemuel's only child, and of how he made dying easy for Lemuel and attempted to comfort Lemuel's widow—and still the loan was not repaid. The second husband, J. Pitt Blackstone, had no interest in the late Lemuel's debts, if no legal note recorded them; and here was this strange old soul wanting to thwart rightful heirs of money, and bestow it on an adventuress and a country doctor to whom she had been long indebted!

HE THOUGHT of the professor, rebelling against everything—and cutting the sanitarium grass—how he would welcome the opportunity to have a fortune willed him that he might give Mary black velvet and pearls. The doctor began to realize how tempting a career this intellectual high-binding can be! Looking at the fat wudge before him, he wondered if it was less contemptible to prey upon her with hypnotic flattery than to bravely ally oneself with the cause of organized violence?

"I can not accept, my dearest," Madame Marcella was saying.

Mrs. Blackstone valiantly attempted to create a scene whereat Poupée jumped up yapping and upset the wooden wig block. Stifling a laugh, Madame Marcella urged the doctor to leave her patient to her high priestess rites. Glad of the respite, the doctor left the sun-parlor to discover the erstwhile professor hitching up a suspender in true hired-man style before he clipped the box hedge.

"How does it go?"

"The only chore so far was to haul medicated salt into the hydrotherapy department—but I'm learning to curse quite neatly," was the report; "I hope to get down to a working basis before the week is out. What word from Madame Marcella?"

The doctor related what had happened.

"Maybe she wants even bigger plunder," suggested the professor, "all instead of half of the estate—perhaps she hopes to crowd you out."

"I shall refuse the inheritance," said the doctor grimly, "besides, it is more than likely that Maggie Blackstone will outlive all of us. Now if she would only pay her just debts—but that's another matter. I must say that this companion person isn't exactly repellent—ah, here she is," as Madame Marcella tripped down the steps, an attractive figure in her aristocratic linen tailleur.

The doctor did not notice the professor's expression. "She's waving at me," he said grimly, "wants to get me aside to fix up this inheritance thing, going to hypnotize me, say we were interns together our last few life-times—some such stuff."

Madame Marcella came upon them only to stand very still while the professor, dropping his clippers upon Dammit's recumbent form, gasped, "Mary—Mary Weaver!"

"Lance—Lance Weaver!" glancing at the doctor to see if he was about to call for aid.

"What are you doing here?"

"I never had a past, but I admit I am enjoying a present," she murmured, "companion to Mrs. Blackstone."

"I thought you were with your sister—you have written regularly——"

"I thought you were going to stay in Chicago—I left my revered sister six weeks ago, have been sending my letters back there and they have posted them on to the children and you. They think I am a hotel hostess in Quimby, and didn't want you to know it. You see, it's a lie all around. I've been earning so much money I couldn't stop—but I was going to tell you very soon. It happened this way—I was on the train from Boston to New York, preparing to go hunt a job, as I threatened. I thought I might as well have a radical sabbatical, too. Really, I had to do this—for I'd rather go into a stranger's kitchen than a rich relation's attic. I thought, whichever of us got the better job, we would hold onto it no matter what the other did. As our son would say, I've beaten you to it, haven't I?" She ignored the doctor.

"To continue: I met Mrs. Blackstone on the train, en route for this place, the nurse who was to bring her had disappointed at the last moment, so she was alone. She thought she had a heart attack—but it was indigestion, for she'd been eating goose livers and pastry. I made her comfortable and flattered her, and almost cried a little with her—because I was so worried about my own family. She told me her life-story and said she was willing to share Poupée's affections with me if I'd only come on to the sanitarium and get her settled—just for a few days. And she named a sum that looked like a house and lot to me—again quoting our son! I saw she was rich, helpless, harmless and lonely. Terribly lonely. I was poor, helpless, harmless—and desperate. Terribly desperate. So I came. I didn't want her to know who I was, so I named myself Madame Marie Marcella and invented a cunning baby-blue history, ending with my discovery of the road to happiness via the higher vibrations. Being a psychology professor's wife gave me the inside information and properly impressive terms to use."

"Didn't she question you after you got here?" said the professor.

"NO ONE questions any one too closely if they are gaining from them. It is only when they are afraid of losing that they scream for references and character. Yes, I learned that, too, darning your socks and keeping on good terms with the faculty wives. My domesticity was only a smoke screen for all I did learn—but never had a chance to practise. Crying was my wildest dissipation."

"Why—Mary," he gasped, glancing at the doctor as if to say, "Did you put dope in my coffee or am I hearing aright?"

"Your chief cry was that you could not know the world, due to your narrowed environment—then how did you expect to know your wife?"

"You would have had the ducking-pond for this a hundred and fifty years ago," he told her soberly.

"In some states you could have the divorce court," she retorted, "for failure to provide adequately for your family. All the astonishment not being on one side, may I ask what you are doing here?"

"I'm an outside helper—forty a month, and we eat in a shed and I'm to bunk with Paddy Dolan. I came in hopes of being a psychoanalyst at the sanitarium, but the doctor says you fill the post—I salute you. He was kind enough to have me taken on as assistant gardener."

"We have our private dining-room, and drive every afternoon, and I sleep in an ivory-tinted, silk-paneled room—and I have sixty dollars a week. I have so many of Mrs. Blackstone's old clothes to make over for the girls that I lay awake nights planning the styles."

"It would be awkward if they found out we were related," admitted the professor, "I'll keep in the offing until you make a getaway—or perhaps you are planning not to go? The doctor says you've just refused a legacy—how indiscreet," an amused yet bitter expression in his eyes.

Doctor Bellamy felt called upon to make a remark. "I think a network of lies a most nerve-racking affair—and if your wife stays on, you better cut the grass somewhere else."

"We've changed places," Mary said gleefully. "You're doing the housework end of the game and I'm doing the brain throbs—you'll know how hard it is to keep up and coming after six o'clock. I find it delightfully easy, I reel off my be happy, be glad, be joyous, think harmony—and so on until I find myself almost believing it—and they coo and cuckoo their praises and shower me with gifts until I feel ashamed. Now I must refuse a legacy—to do so, I shall have to disappear. To tell my real name would disgrace us, to accept under an assumed name would be discovered. The children, your reputation, you shabby, blundering dear——"

"I OUGHT not to stand talking to the 'gentry,'" the professor interposed with chilling politeness, "I'm supposed to clip this hedge. If you want a word with me——"

"Do use my house for the intrigue," urged the doctor, who enjoyed the situation. "Dear me, I had no idea I was to become involved with a Bolshevist wife and a shell-shocked husband—all because Maggie Blackstone never would repay her husband's debts."

"It doesn't seem right suddenly to attach ourselves to you—for better or for worse," said the professor.

"Don't mention it," was the polite retort, "ever since the war first-aid has become a fixed habit. The keeping-room is yours for the conference, I assure you it has witnessed many violent scenes. Question: Is it to be wise or otherwise?"

Mary became amusingly dignified. "I have little time," she informed her husband.

"So have I—although it is not spent in wearing some one's else diamonds and manicuring their aura," with masculine resentment at being beaten at his own game. "Shall we say to-morrow night?"

"After ten. I give a Mrs. Bertie White a thought treatment at eight and the Hubbell girls absent treatments after that—then I stay with Mrs. Blackstone until she is snoring rhythmically. I'll use a little bromid along with the soul vibrations tomorrow. Then I exercise Poupée."

They both looked at the doctor for approval. "Come as late as you like," he said easily. "My compliments, Madame Marcella—goodby, Weaver, be sure you get the

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hedge even." Whistling for Dammit, he disappeared.

III

THE next night Doctor Bellamy discreetly absented himself from his own keeping-room until the door was flung open by the treasonous professor and his astonishing wife. He then entered in almost shy fashion, puzzled to know what attitude to adopt.

"Well," looking from one to the other, "is it to be wise or otherwise?"

The professor was nearest the door, shadows hiding his expression. But the reading-lamp shone full on Mary's face to betray traces of her usual tears.

"Doctor Bellamy," she began in tense fashion, "I know my own plan of action. I am going back to the children no matter what Lance does," a warning look toward the rebel, "and I shall write my confession and send it to Mrs. Blackstone."

Doctor Bellamy came nearer. "Write your confession?"

"If I tried to tell her, I'd cry—and she'd cry—and we'd get nowhere at all. Everything important I've ever tried to say I've found myself crying—and the listeners pay more heed to the tears than the words," a little sob proved her own statement, "so I must write the truth—as if I were making a statement for the press, and then I will disappear."

"What is your program?" the doctor asked Weaver.

The professor stood as erect as if he was about to review a regiment. "Mary's predicament proves to me that intellectual lackey to the superfluously wealthy has small attractions," he remarked. "I'd probably end in an equally sad tangle—although I might not give way to tears. She is quite right to reassemble the family, for I'll be able to support them."

"Not with money earned as editor of a traitor journal," she protested. "I'd rather go back into rich relations' attics—yes, I would," weeping softly.

"I shall take the editorship because you have forced me to."

"It is the betraying of faith that makes it so wrong," she insisted. "Take Mrs. Blackstone, a poor wudge of a thing—yet she believed in me and now I must tell her I am an imposter, a ladylike imposter true enough—but think of the shame of it. No one would have suspected me of doing this any more than they would accuse a thief dressed in a nun's habit. The same element of faith that the boys and girls have had in us, this neurotic old soul felt in me. It would be the same element of faith that the agitators would feel and place in you and you'd betray it just for the sake of a little money. You know which is the right of the matter—and because you know it so well, you are qualified to help with the wrong side. And you'd betray your own self, as well, which is the worst of it. My dear, it is not worth it—we are meant to be the shabby-queer sort who never manage to save for a rainy day—but who always have enough sunny weather so that it does not matter." Tears made the last remark almost incoherent.

"I shall accept the editorship of *The Revolt*," the professor said. "What else is left me? Has it occured to you that—once the news of your escapade is noised about—the university would refuse to retain me? You have run us up a blind alley regarding any other solution."

She stopped sobbing, a dangerous symptom. "Yet I must tell her the truth; if I did not, it would keep saying itself over and over in my brain—I'd be mad with that unspoken truth. I've planned out how my confession is to start: 'I am Mary Weaver, wife of Lance Weaver who is a professor of psychology in ——' and so on. After I've had the satisfaction of telling all of it, and appealing to her to keep silent and to understand, then I will feel satisfied and normal."

Doctor Bellamy chuckled. He was recalling how many times he had appealed to Maggie Blackstone for a charity or to do a small kindness or to repay his loan to her first husband!

Weaver turned to him. "As if she wouldn't tattle the news far and wide if Mary is rash enough to do as she says. Gossip is as vital to her as the Gospel is to Mary. It is Mary who is settling my destiny."

"I must tell the truth as my father taught me," she said, beating her hands together hopelessly, "if I disappeared, she would hunt until she found me, she is so fond of the person she thinks I am—I'd feel haunted, not respectable, not fit to be with the children—what a fool I've been," giving way to tears.

Doctor Bellamy patted her gently on the shoulder.

THE professor watched them as he ended, "You have decided the thing. Go ahead and tell her the truth and I am barred from my profession. Disappear and not tell her the truth and you are on the road to insanity because of your Puritanical bringing up which makes you have a sneaking belief in a hell with a jolly brimstone fire for people who tell a lie—no matter under what pressure. If you'd been a bit less orthodox, you'd never have dared to have done such a thing as this—but once you took the leap it was from top to bottom and now you must go through the same extreme antics to get back on your pedestal. Very well—but remember what the scholastic world has to say of such things—their limiting power of comprehension. How well you do know it—how many times have you sat in judgment! Yet my new job—the editorship—would welcome your confession—as fiction it might bring you half a cent a word," there was the suggestion of cruelty in his tone. "Suppose I take you up the hill now? Doctor Bellamy ought to have some rest."

She wrapped her cloak about her with a weary gesture. "I can't show him how wrong he is when I am all wrong myself."

"I am not interested in whether a thing is right or wrong," the professor hastened to add, "I'm going to take a well-paid job."

They said good night as calmly as if they had dropped in for an evening call and the doctor watched them trudge up the hill—she to the private suite of Mrs. J. Pitt Blackstone, and he to share the attic loft of Paddy Dolan! He surmised correctly that they scarcely broke silence as they did so, everything that was to be said having been said, and the result being an open enmity.

The doctor sat in the July moonlight to speculate over the situation. He also considered the personal slant to the thing—the offered legacy of Mrs. Blackstone. That legacy had been a family joke for years—if one could say the doctor and Dammit the dog and Home Rule, the mare, comprised a family. For more years than any one cared to remember, Mrs. Blackstone had promised to repay the loan, always followed by a long silence in which she reconsidered her rash words. Mrs. Blackstone, absorbed with her own ailments and the cults of quacks and her lap-dogs, did not approve of the doctor since he understood her too well. She knew, however, that the doctor could have used the money many times to advantage—sometimes for himself but usually for some one else. There would have been something almost impossible in being made coheir with a psychic companion and a lap-dog! He kept slipping his ring from one finger of his right hand to one of his left, wondering whether Mary would write the confession and if her husband would accept the editorship and if both actions were not wise but otherwise?

Returning from his calls the next morning, Eccles met him with an air of mystery.

"The sanitarium lady is in your study, sir, she's writing—'as been there some time, came in with a rush and asked for paper and pen and ink, said you would be agreeable." Eccles hoped for abuse so he could give battle as to what he had permitted. "Said 'er patient was 'aving baths so she was free to come."

The doctor, who felt his home had suddenly been turned into an arena, knocked at his own study door, sending Eccles to attend to Home Rule.

"Come in," said Mary tearfully.

She was folding a bulky looking manuscript and trying to appear composed. She wore a shabby dress and hat which he recognized as part of her faculty wardrobe and traveling bags were beside the table. She looked up with an appealing air.

"Please read it," she asked, "before I send it to her. I can catch the afternoon train if you'll let me wait until then. My trunk can be called for later—there's nothing in it that she has given me. As for Lance—if he is going to do as he said, there is nothing more to tell him."

"THERE, there," advised the doctor, "we won't borrow trouble. You can't make yourself out the worst person in the world—so don't pity yourself for your wickedness. So you think you owe it to Maggie Blackstone to explain what an imposter you are—ho—hum," reaching for his glasses.

He read the statement through without comment. It was an overly detailed woman's confession of conditions which Mrs. Blackstone could no more have comprehended than Home Rule. It began with the childish—

My name is Mary Weaver and my husband is Professor Lance Weaver of —— University. I must explain why I became your companion, using a false name and assuming false abilities. We needed the money. We love our work but we need more money—our growing family has appetites to correspond. And my husband can not see the right of my taking a position which I could satisfactorily fill and which would make everything so much easier. It was a great disappointment to me when he would not see this—for since we are intended to be faculty people, we really ought to do anything which would make it possible for Lance to stay with his classes. There is something

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almost divinely satisfying in helping "blind spring" open its brave young eyes, and so-called narrow professors flatter themselves that is the biggest part of their work—helping youth adjust its values. In a sense, such men are consecrated—but they MUST eat! I am sure you will see how this has come about and that you will keep my secret.

Turning the last page, which urged Mrs. Blackstone to leave her money to her relatives and repay Doctor Bellamy, she had written:

I shall return to my family, and if my husband will return to his university, I will try once more to manage and skimp—because I realize he could do so many worse things in this world, even if he were much better paid. Youth demands a certain number of patient, talented fools to help them out of swaddling clothes—and that is what such men as Lance do and must do—and it is wonderful to have found it out and not be too downhearted over the discovery.

Truly a "human document" with just a suggestion of tears expressed in the honestly written lines.

"She must keep my secret," Mary said soberly.

"I AM positive she must—wait here until train time. I'm going up to the sanitarium to give your husband a telegram which came here this morning. He evidently wired them and offered my address as his own."

"It is about that editorship," she whispered. "Tear it up—don't let him see it. He'll be deported or interned if he writes all they want him to——"

The doctor shook his head. "After all, it must be what he decides—just as you decided to run away and find a victim all your own, after he refused to let you work in the bank. I must take it to him—and give Mrs. Blackstone your confession while you pick me fresh bouquets. How will that be?"

Before luncheon vases of old-fashioned flowers stood as fragrant sentinels from the reception hall to Eccles's quarters. Watching this attractive, shabby, agitated person dart about to change the books and ornaments and shake up cushions, Eccles wondered whether she was of the sea-serpent or the seraphim variety of womanhood, since, to his mind, she had betrayed symptoms belonging to both varieties.

Her task ended, the confessed penitent waited for the doctor's return. When the jog-jog of Home Rule's feet sounded, she ran to view the wabbly buggy rounding the curve of the drive with Dammit at the dashboard and the doctor and her husband on the seat.

The doctor drove into the barn. Then Lance Weaver, no longer in gardener attire, came up the veranda steps. He was tearing up sheets of paper and smiling, the kindly "wrinkled" smile he used to wear when he assured Mary the black silk dress could be used for best for another year—Mary being so beautiful!

"It was not wrong to write this confession for Mrs. Blackstone," he began, "but it was not suitable. It was suitable for me, so the doctor gave it to me. While I read it, he bearded the lioness in her den to tell her what he considered was suitable. That you sent your farewell to her because you were bored and disgusted, that she was a stuffy soul who despaired of a third husband as well as a hypochondriac of the first water who ought to scrub floors if she wanted to effect a cure. That you could not keep your sense of humor in bondage much longer, and you loathed that dust-mop of a Poupée and so on, you even left behind all the things she had given you—do you see why he did it? Because it infuriated her, she became too angry to listen to another word concerning you—to even let him tell your real name!

"And he is the one person whose word she would accept without questioning, although she hates him. You became a viper, a deceitful creature in her eyes and she was far more interested in trying to faint and sending for another high priestess to take charge of her than in listening to him discuss you. Which was what he wanted. It has protected your being revealed to her, although you wrote a most honest confession. Well, she grew purplish and ordered him away and said she would cut him off without a shilling, and this time she meant it. So the doctor returned to me and completed his home missionary work. He wants me to impress upon you this fact—that he tried hard to tell Mrs. Blackstone more about you, but she refused to listen once she was aware that you were disgusted with her, and had not stolen her diamonds, and that there is nothing to worry about since the world is populated with people who are likely never to meet again!"

"So that was why he took the confession," she was half-way crying, "so it was not 'wrong but not suitable'—perhaps he is right!"

"THAT'S the dress your sister gave you three summers ago, isn't it?" he asked irrelevantly. "It is wonderfully becoming—what I was going to add, is: I've resigned as assistant-gardener and I'm coming along with you. I'll tutor or sell ice-cream cones until something else turns up for the rest of the year, because I'm not going to take the editorship of *The Radical*—wait, no tears yet," he insisted seriocomically. "I think it was reading words without tears as punctuation that gave me the insight into all you thought and tried to do. Sometimes a man, even a psychology professor, is married eighteen years before he becomes acquainted with his wife's—soul."

"Then you do understand—that we are doomed to be sincere and being shabby is a second consideration? That I'm willing to try again if only——"

"I want you to write about the bank position," he urged quickly, as if to get it over with, "to be sure you can have it when we go back."

Mary was perilously on the verge of tears. "What do you mean?"

"Because I am doomed to be a professor—and glad of it—does not excuse my being selfishly unfair to my wife. We must adjust our own sense of values instead of trying extreme, outrageous measures. This is what we are eternally preaching to the young things—let us try a dose of our own medicine. My adjustment is to pay tribute to your intelligence, to admit, it must be divided time as well as divided skirts for women like yourself, with almost grown families and who are glorious enough to stand by hopeless philosophers! We are putting our particular case on human grounds, as Bellamy advocated—not theoretical ones. I don't know how the other starving savants will finish. I wish they would stop theories and try the human angle as a lever. I don't believe you'll cry so much, Mary, or believe in eternal damnation when you have a weekly wage and responsibilities not hemmed in by kitchen walls. I'd rather have my wife economically independent than washing blankets and being too tearful to listen to my last paper. And your adjustment is to realize, as you have done, that once a professor—always a professor and——"

THE doctor appeared in time to spoil the tableau. He managed to escape their praises and marshal them into lunch, and after a little he drove them to the train and waved them Godspeed and drove home with Dammit as his safety-valve for comment.

He realized the old debt would never be paid—that at the price of his own money he had given Mary Weaver's confession to her husband, because he felt it would bring about what ought to be, and had resorted to his own originality in explaining to Maggie Blackstone why her beloved companion had suddenly forsaken her. To have asked Maggie Blackstone to understand that confession would have been as practical as to have expected Eccles to have written it. To have kept it from Lance Weaver, on the brink of making a hopeless idiot of himself and his abilities, would have been as wrong as to deprive the sanitarium owners of their inmates! It was adjusting values, also, and losing his chance at a well-deserved legacy. It was returning to the university field a well-trained and talented man, and a sympatico woman, who was to be another pioneer in proving that a woman had the right to make her own wage, as long as the nursery was empty and her husband a philosopher!

"That is my form of endowing a chair and supporting the new-woman movement," the doctor decided, "but, Dammit, no one will ever know it. Likewise, I am barred from ever entering the sanitarium portals—still, I never fancied revolving doors—can't slam 'em when I'm mad!"

Beginning with the July number, EVERYBODY'S will be on the news-stands earlier, arriving on the 15th of the month instead of the 23d, as heretofore. A detailed announcement of the change in size and new publication date appears in the Publisher's Talk on page 3 of this issue.

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Frank Aloysius Robert Tinney and his son.

From Funerals to Fun

By Timothy Vane

Everybody's Entertainers Series

THIS is the story of Philadelphia's fastest embalmer and how he became a Broadway star. To be sure he was also a fire-engine driver of no mean attainments and for several summers he swanked about as chief lifeguard on the Atlantic City beach next the steel pier. Then the war made a captain of him. But these were mere avocations. Twenty years ago, he really was settled for life as an undertaker's assistant in a city that is extremely partial to funerals, when an inner urge, driven on by circumstances over which he had precious little control, turned him into a popular comedian. That is the tale to be told and its hero is known to the parish register as Frank Aloysius Robert Tinney.

Most chronic playgoers know Tinney, his tricks and his manners. For even if they have not seen him in the flesh, they have at least run into one or another of the several mimics who sustain life in the English music-halls and the American vaudeville temples by giving imitations of him. They know how he comes shuffling out and announces trustingly that he is about to tell the story of the goat that had its nose cut off. With much pother and whispering, with grave and naïve conviction that the point of the jest is a momentous matter to be approached thoughtfully and, if any error creeps in, to be reapproached, he goes into audible consultation with the orchestra leader. He spends several minutes instructing that contemptuous accomplice how to feed him with the right cue by asking: "But how does he smell?" Only the wretched fellow mixes things up by asking: "Dear, dear, how does the unhappy quadruped breathe?" So poor Tinney, who had hoped to shout "Rotten" at the top of his lungs, is covered with confusion and beats a retreat by playing "Poet and Peasant" on the bagpipes.

When you thus find a fellow citizen deriving an income comparable to that of the President of the United States by the simple process of telling bad jokes as badly as possible, you can't help speculating on the process by which he built up so strange a commodity. Of Tinney, certainly, you always wonder vaguely where he got his style, where he got his jokes and where he got his shoes—those monstrous and unbelievable shoon which leave so little room on the stage for any one else.

As to his style, it was an accident. Tinney was living with his folks in Philadelphia when, at the age of five, he somehow convinced his father that a stage career awaited him. In a church entertainment in their parish, he had, it is true, provoked the laughter of the audience. But this had been quite unintentional. Still, the memory of that laughter and applause hung around the Tinney *ménage* and before long the youngster was assailed with burnt cork, thrust into starched white dresses and sent forth to sing three times a day at Keith's old Bijou Theatre in Eighth Street—a famous vaudeville house known to the natives as the Buy Joe.

Forty dollars a week was to be the salary; and by Saturday the management had magnificently decided that the newcomer, billed as Baby Frank Tinney, should be featured and, furthermore, that he had earned the right to appear only twice a day during his second week. Unfortunately Tinney, *père*, misinterpreted this tribute as an aspersion. "My kid's good enough, he is, to appear five times a day," quoth Tinney, *père*, a trifle truculent. And so, after one delirious week, the young artist was snatched from the arms of Thespis and packed off to school.

HOWEVER, he had smelled powder and grease-paint, and, just as Laurette Taylor in her childhood used to go the rounds of the church entertainments in Harlem, so Tinney and his brother did songs and dances and jokes at the parochial shindigs of their home town. This kept him in funds right up to the time when his father, in a burst of ambition, dragged him down off the fire-engine and sent him struggling to Jefferson Medical. There one day our hero heard that while it took four years and more to learn to be a doctor, it took only six months to learn to be an undertaker. To a simple and eager soul, there seemed to be no choice in the matter at all, and before long the thwarted minstrel was quite the life of many a wake on the banks of the Schuylkill.

He might have gone on this way indefinitely had not the manager of a minstrel show encountered him when, like the true Philadelphian he is, he was balmily taking the Saturday afternoon air on Chestnut Street. Was it true, the manager asked, that as a comedian, he was by way of being a scream? "I'm good, I am," Tinney replied. And in what vein, the manager asked, did the comedy flow?

"Well," the unembarrassed embalmer replied, "me and my brother, we got two jokes this season, we have. I say to him: 'Hey, there, I know what'd stick you.' And he says, 'Do you?' and I say 'Yes,' and he says 'What?' and I say 'A pin.' Then I say to him, I say, 'Say, I certainly am sorry I bought that wooden whistle.' And he says 'Are you?' and I say 'Yes,' and he says, 'Well, Frank, why are you sorry you bought the wooden whistle?' and I say 'Because it wouldn't whistle.' That's our line this year," Tinney went on. "Of course they might not get it out on the

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road but it goes great here in the city."

"Well," said the manager reflectively, "I guess in my show, we'll just have you sing."

Yet after the minstrel show had struck out along the great highway, it so happened that one of the real comedians had the measles or fell through a manhole or something, and Fate propelled Tinney into the center of the stage. He was in a panic. "What's the matter of you?" asked the manager bitterly. "You claim you're a comedian and now's your chance."

But Tinney explained that, whereas he was excruciatingly funny, he needed some one with him. He couldn't work alone. "Well," said the manager carelessly, "fix it up with the orchestra leader. I guess he can ask you the questions."

So Tinney labored to train the orchestra leader as a foil and all went smoothly till the point of the wooden whistle wheeze, when Tinney was foiled indeed. For the orchestra leader forgot his part and instead of asking helpfully: "Well, Frank, why are you sorry you bought the wooden whistle?" he merely said, "Oh, is that so?" or something equally discouraging.

For a moment the stars reeled in their courses while Tinney, staring anxiously across the footlights, protested: "Say, you're crabbing my act, you are. You hadn't ought to of said that. You had ought to of said——" and thus went on to straighten the fellow out. Onlookers from the wings were horrified. "It's twenty-three for him," said the endman in the snappy slang of the day. "Just listen to him." "Not at all," said the manager, who must have been a genius in his way, "just listen to the audience."

And indeed, the audience was in such fits of laughter that the outraged orchestra leader was laboriously instructed that night never under any circumstances to give Tinney the right cue. From that day to this, Tinney has subsisted almost entirely on bad jokes gone wrong.

So it has happened that he never has needed a partner in the sense that Stone had Montgomery or that Fields had Weber. He has merely worked with whoever was handy. His foils have been every orchestra leader from Los Angeles to Leicester Square, and he has also pressed into service such varied artists as Vernon Castle, Ethel Levey and the old horse who is touring with him this year in "Tickle Me."

THE memoirs of this veteran actor—of the horse, that is—would make amusing literature. He doubtless made his début in "Mazeppa," and it is certain that for many seasons he raced with great virtuosity and artistic sincerity in "The County Fair" and "Ben Hur." Marilynn Miller danced on his broad and comfortable back in the circus scene of the 1919 Follies, and then, just as he thought he was due for an honorable retirement from the stage, Tinney bought him. He was much the worse for wear and his years were twenty-eight, but Tinney paid a thousand dollars for him because he was an artist. He is not only very, very old, but, besides having a cracked hoof, he is incorrigibly lazy, so that he has to be taken to and from the theatre in a truck. He's just like a chorus girl, Tinney complains, what with his elegant stable and his powder and paint and all. This ancient beast's main duty in life at present is to throw a fit eight times a week at the very suggestion of Tinney's mounting him. He's an amusing old comedian, but they do say the funniest part of "Tickle Me" is the scene the audience never sees. It's the affectionate exchange of badinage and insults between Tinney and his milkwhite steed as they foregather in the wings before going on.

Tinney, then, can pick up his partners

A typical Tinney pose and grin.

wherever he happens to be and no rehearsals are really necessary. I was deeply impressed with this fact one summer evening back in 1914 when a number of us were paying our respects to Ethel Levey in her dressing-room at the London Hippodrome. A frantic message came from the manager to the effect that Shirley Kellogg had unexpectedly "biffed off to the Continong" and that Tinney wanted Miss Levey to go on in her place with him in the restaurant scene. She sent back regretful word that she had never even seen it and couldn't very well go on without a single rehearsal. Which rejoinder brought Tinney in person.

"Why, Ethel," he said, in loud reproach, "you know you don't have to rehearse at all, you don't. I'll tell you everything to say and you just say it." Which sounded so easy that she gave a pat to her hair, a switch to her skirts and started for the stage. We raced around in front to find them already on. Tinney was saying: "Now, Ethel, let's do the joke about the peas. Come ahead, Miss Levey, stop laughing and we'll do the joke about the peas. You say you think my table manners are perfectly elegant and you ask me how I manage to keep my peas from rolling off my knife."

"Well, Frank," Miss Levey repeated dutifully, "how DO you keep your peas from rolling off your knife?"

"Why, Ethel, that's easy, that is—I mix 'em up with my mashed potato."

And so it went for fifteen minutes. The last we saw of them, they were bowing hand in hand, with Tinney much affected and thanking every one for being so kind to him and Ethel and the children.

That's Tinney's style and that's where he found it. His shoes? Well, he inherited them from a vaudeville monologist who had bought them thirty years before from an old darkey in Alabama. They cost fifty cents. Tinney got them for nothing.

HIS jokes? He picks those up around town. When he feels a new show impending he sends for one of those Times Square scribblers who make their living by writing monologs and orders a new one from him. This he reads over and pronounces terrible. He then reads it to Willie Collier who makes suggestions while Tinney makes notes. It is next tried on Cohan. More suggestions and more notes. He then goes in despair to Tommy Gray, who puts in what Tinney calls the "nifties." As when he now glowers at the orchestra leader and says: "You're like a man who wears a toupee—you're only kidding yourself," or again: "I ain't going to have more than three children, I ain't, because, look here, I read in an almanac that every fourth person born into the world is a Chinaman."

Yet with all this prayerful preparation, most of Tinney's fun just crops up fresh and unstudied as a result of the first impact between him and his audience. The biggest laugh that ever rewarded him shook the New Amsterdam Theatre the opening night of "Watch Your Step." That was a revue that had not one star but a constellation. The Castles, Brice and King, Sallie Fisher, Harry Kelly and his dog—these had all done their best tricks, but ten-thirty had come and gone and there was no sign of Tinney. We had come to the conclusion that he was laid low on some bed of pain when, in the Palm Beach hotel scene, Vernon Castle called out: "Where's the hat-boy?" On rushed Tinney, breathless. As the welcome subsided, he could be heard explaining plaintively: "I've been sitting out there all blacked up since half-past seven waiting for that dirty bum to say: 'Where's the hat-boy?'" Whereupon, as the English newspapers say, laughter and applause.

Beginning with the July issue, EVERYBODY'S goes back to the old, easily handled, easily read "standard" size—like *Adventure, Atlantic, Harper's*—with the advertising matter in a separate section. Look for the new size on the news-stands June 15th instead of on the 23d, as heretofore.

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The "Mysterious Stranger" Defense

By Melville Davisson Post

A MARKED departure from the familiar detective story is Mr. Post's unraveling of this murder mystery. Here both the circumstances of the crime and its solution are masterfully presented together in the tense, hushed atmosphere of a crowded court-room by an attorney whose methods are none too ethical, but whose skill is extraordinary.

NOW, Ellen," said the attorney, "I want you to tell us precisely why you called to me when you ran out of the house—why you said, 'Save me, Colonel.'"

"I was scared," replied the witness. "I didn't know what was going to happen to me."

"You thought the same thing that had happened to the lawyer, Mr. Collander, might also happen to you."

"I don't know, Colonel. I was scared."

It was the third day of the criminal trial. Colonel Armant had put the prisoner on the stand in her own defense. It seemed a desperate hazard. A woman remains an experiment as a witness. The old experts about the court-room were pretty nearly a unit against the experiment in this case. The prisoner was too much of an enigma; one of those little, faded, blonde women, with a placid, inscrutable face—capable of everything or of nothing, as one chose to assume it.

The big attorney went on.

"You did know that something had happened to Mr. Collander?"

"I heard the shots—yes, I knew something had happened to him."

"Just a moment, on this feature," continued the attorney. "You do not agree with the chief of police about the number of shots fired; you thought there were three shots; one, and then two together, or almost together?"

The prosecuting attorney interrupted.

"If you are going to lead the witness, Colonel," he said, "why don't you lead her to some purpose? Why don't you lead her to say there was only *one* shot?"

The huge counsel for the prisoner put out his hand toward the speaker, in the gesture of one who brushes aside a disturbing fly, but he did not otherwise move in his chair. His whole body was in repose. He spoke without moving a muscle.

"Now, Ellen," he said, "the prosecuting attorney makes it a point against you that you were expecting something to happen. What do you say about that? You don't deny it, do you?"

"Well, Colonel," replied the witness, "I thought something might happen to Mr. Collander. I thought it all along."

"Then you did expect it?"

"Yes," replied the witness. "I suppose you could say I did expect it."

The attorney rose.

"That brings us to another point made against you."

He took up a weapon lying on the table before him. It was a thirty-two-caliber cylinder revolver of the usual type.

"You can identify this weapon?" the attorney asked.

"It is the revolver that Mr. Collander kept in his bedroom."

"Now, Ellen," said the attorney, "the state has introduced testimony to show that you took this pistol to the gunsmith, Mr. Parks, and had him clean it and load it for you. That was on Tuesday, a week before Mr. Collander's death. The prosecuting attorney calls on me to explain that incident on some theory, if I can, which will be inconsistent with his theory that you thereby provided yourself with a weapon in order to kill Mr. Collander." He paused. "We are not concerned with anybody's theory, Ellen, but what is the truth about it?"

"I WAS afraid, Colonel, just as I have said. I thought there ought to be a pistol in the house that would shoot."

The attorney paused a moment as in reflection; then he went on.

"That's the second point the state makes against you. There is still another; let us get them all together so we can tell the jury precisely what they mean. The prosecuting attorney has shown, here, by a number of witnesses, that you sometimes threatened the lawyer, Mr. Collander; that you have been known to quarrel with him, and that you have more than once said you would kill him. Now, isn't that true?"

The witness hesitated a moment. She looked vaguely about the court-room; presently her eyes rested on the floor.

"Yes," she said, "it's all true; but I was not the only person who wanted to kill him." She hesitated. "What I said was talk—just talk; the other people who wanted to kill him meant it."

The big attorney lifted his body with a little gesture.

"The fact is, Ellen, that you were always fond of him."

The witness continued to look down at the floor.

"Yes," she said, "too fond of him, Colonel."

The attorney seemed to draw his big body together. He stood up before his table.

"Now," he went on, "let us get all the bad features of this case together. You say other persons wished this man's death. What makes you say that, Ellen?"

"Well, Colonel," replied the witness, "that's pretty hard for me to answer. Everybody knows that Mr. Collander had a lot of enemies, a lot of people didn't like him; a lot of people who had just as much reason to threaten to kill him as I had, and they must have meant it when I didn't mean it."

"Ellen," said the attorney, "let us try to be a little more precise about this. You say that there were persons who wished to kill the lawyer, Collander; that you thought he was in danger, and that you had this weapon cleaned and loaded so he would have some means of defending himself."

The prosecuting attorney interrupted.

"Just a moment, Colonel," he said. "The witness hasn't said anything of the sort."

The attorney made an irrelevant gesture.

"Perhaps not entirely in those words," he said, "but it is the substance and intent of the answers. I shall permit her to reply for herself. What do you say about that, Ellen?"

The witness answered at once.

"That's it," she said, "that's exactly it. I thought Mr. Collander was in danger of being killed, and I thought he ought to have a pistol that was loaded and would shoot. That's why I took it to Mr. Parks."

The big attorney nodded in assent.

"Now, what made you think that the decedent was in danger of his life? You must have had some reason for it?"

"Well," said the witness, "people were

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The murderer was not saved that day in the court-room. She was saved the day of the crime, when McNagel went out of the study for a moment.

always coming to see Mr. Collander. I have often heard him in a quarrel with people who came in to see him. His study opens out on the porch; they sometimes come to the porch and knocked on the door."

"They didn't always knock on the door, did they?" inquired the attorney. "Sometimes they called him?"

The witness looked at the lawyer as though she did not precisely follow his question.

"Yes," she said, "sometimes they called him."

"And then they would be standing down on the ground," continued the attorney. "The porch before the door is narrow; that would put them below Mr. Collander if he were standing in the door."

"Yes, sir," said the witness, "the ground is lower than the porch; anybody standing on the ground would be below Mr. Collander."

Again the prosecuting attorney interrupted.

"What's that got to do with it?" he said. "Are you going to drag in the 'Mysterious Stranger' defense?"

The big lawyer swung around on his feet.

"Your Honor," he said, addressing the judge, "I object to this expression. It is an unfair expression. It has no place in a judicial trial of which the sole object is to arrive at the truth. The prosecuting attorney has no right to undertake to prejudice the prisoner before the jury. That is an ungenerous expression. If the prisoner did not kill Mr. Collander, some one else did kill him, and if we don't know, precisely, who that other person was we can not dismiss him as mythical, as a 'mysterious stranger,' as though he were a figment of the imagination."

The judge did not reply. He was accustomed to these passages between the attorneys, staged always for effect, and he took no part in them if he could avoid it.

THE prosecuting attorney replied with ill-concealed irony.

"If the prisoner did not kill him!" he echoed.

"Quite so," replied the Colonel, "and for your benefit, sir, I will say that I propose to show, in a moment, that she not only did not kill him, but that she could not have killed him."

The prosecuting attorney made a vague gesture in the air with his extended fingers. The aspect of irony remained.

"Go to it," he said.

"Now, Ellen," continued the attorney, "what made you think there was some one outside of the house on the ground below the porch who called Mr. Collander to the door?"

The prosecuting attorney was on his feet before the sentence was ended.

"Your Honor," he said, "this thing is ridiculous. Colonel Armant has started in at the end of this case to set up one of the old stock defenses. Your honor knows 'em; everybody knows 'em; they are the last resort of the guilty; the 'alibi' and the 'mysterious stranger.' He could not use the alibi because everybody saw this woman on the spot. Not even Colonel Armant with all his acuteness could get in an alibi. As it happened, Robert McNagel, the chief of police, was out at the engine-house just below Collander's residence. Colonel Armant was there; they were sitting in the engine-house when they heard the shots. McNagel ran with the Colonel to Collander's house; they were the first persons on the ground. McNagel was there when the woman ran out of the house and when she shouted, 'Save me, Colonel.' He went after her and brought her back, so the alibi had to be given up. The only thing left is the 'mysterious stranger.'"

The prosecuting attorney laughed.

"Colonel Armant has to get something to make a defense out of. We have shown that this woman had a motive for killing

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Collander. It is the oldest motive in the world. She lived there as housekeeper. I don't say that other persons did not want to kill him. I have not undertaken to mislead the court about him. Everybody knows our brother Collander was a pretty gay old dog who took a lot of chances on somebody killing him, no doubt. And somebody did kill him, but it was not a 'mysterious stranger.' We have shown who it was. It was the person who had a motive to kill him, the opportunity to kill him, and who not only threatened to do it, but who had prepared a weapon with which to do it. Here are the elements that the law requires, time, place, opportunity, motive and conduct. Why, she as good as said it when McNagel ran after her to bring her back into the house. It was lucky McNagel was on the ground."

The big attorney made an explosive assent.

"It is lucky," he said, "that McNagel was on the ground. It's the very luckiest thing that ever happened."

He turned about toward the prosecuting attorney, now returning to his chair.

"It is true," he said, "I was sitting in the engine-house with McNagel when we heard the shots. He ran with me and we were the first persons on the ground. And that reminds me, I want to ask McNagel a question or two just here."

He looked around. The chief of police was sitting in a chair inside the rail, just behind the prosecuting attorney.

He made a motion as though about to rise.

"Don't get up," said the lawyer. "You can answer where you are. Now, Bobby," he said, "we heard two shots close together. They were very close together, were they not?"

"Yes, Colonel," replied the chief of police, "the two shots were fired in rapid succession."

"But there was interval enough," said the lawyer, "for us to be certain that there were two shots."

"That's right, Colonel," replied the chief, "they were close together, but there were two shots; and that was confirmed by the fact that the pistol on the floor had been twice discharged; there were two empty cartridges in it when we picked it up. It had been fired twice."

"Just a moment, Bobby," the lawyer interrupted. "I want to be absolutely certain about this; there could be no mistake about the fact that you heard two shots; isn't that true?"

"YES, it's true," said the chief, "we heard two shots, there couldn't be any mistake about it."

"Sometimes," said the colonel, "it happens that shots are fired so close together that they make one report. I mean several shots may be fired so rapidly that at a little distance one hears but one report, or so confuses all of the reports that they appear to make but one; isn't that true?"

"Yes, it's true," replied the chief of police. "It happened when Jones was killed over at the power plant, and it happened in our fight with the Lett burglars; I could not say how many times the man had shot at me. I thought he shot at me three times, but he must have shot at me five or six times, for every cylinder in his pistol was empty."

"Ah!" said the colonel. "Now, Bobby, that's just exactly what I wanted to find out. Sometimes shots are fired so close together that the most experienced person—a competent person like yourself—could not say whether there was one report or several reports."

The chief of police took hold of the lapels of his coat in either hand and looked at the attorney.

"You have got it right, Colonel. But you are not trying to make out that only one shot was fired on the night Collander was killed, are you?"

The lawyer's face took on an expression of immense surprise.

"OH, BOBBY," he said, "of course not. What I particularly wish to establish, make certain, is that there were two shots close together; but certainly two shots. Now, isn't that absolutely the fact, Bobby? There may have been more shots fired, simultaneously with these—there may have been three shots or four shots—but beyond question, beyond doubt, there were at least two. We heard them; you heard two shots; isn't that right, Bobby?"

"That's right," replied the chief of police, "there were two, sure."

"Bobby," continued the lawyer, "you are chief of police, you and I were the first persons on the ground. You know more about this than anybody else, and your statement about it is worth more than the statements of all other persons put together; now, listen to me carefully and correct me if I make any mistake. Isn't this what happened? You and I, and some of the boys, were sitting in the engine-house; we were talking; I was telling you about the Baker case—strangest case in the world—when we heard these shots; one right after the other. I do not know how many, but two certainly. You and I ran up to the Collander residence which stands just across the street from the engine-house. As we went in, the prisoner here, Ellen, ran out, and as she ran out she shouted 'Save me, Colonel.' You ran after her to catch her and I went on into the house. By that time Scalley, on the route out here, had come up; we turned the woman over to him and came back. I was standing in the door that led into Collander's study."

The Colonel stopped. He looked intently at the chief of police.

"Now, Bobby," he said, "you won't mind if I say that I have always taken a great deal of interest in you. When you were first appointed I tried to give you the benefit of my experience. I pointed out what ought to be done when a crime was discovered. You are a capable man, Bobby; you saw what I meant and you have profited by it. You know what to do when you get on the scene of a crime. You know how important it is that every precaution shall be taken to preserve the scene of a criminal act, in every detail, precisely as it happened when the crime was discovered; isn't that so, Bobby?"

"Yes, it's so. I don't deny that you put me on to a lot of things and, also, I have learned some for myself. Anyhow, that's right. The first thing to do is to see that everything stays just the way it is."

"Precisely!" replied the attorney. "Now, Bobby, isn't it true that Collander was lying on the floor dead, that his pistol was lying on the floor beside him—two chambers in it empty—and all doors and windows were closed? There were bookcases around the room with glass doors; these were all closed. Now, the first thing you did, Bobby, was to take every precaution to see that all articles in the room should remain precisely as they were found; you put seals on all doors and windows, on all drawers of the tables, and on the doors of the bookcases, so that they would remain closed precisely as they were found. You also carefully chalked on the floor the position of the articles that had to be removed—such, for example, as the weapon and the decedent's body; isn't that precisely true?"

"Yes, it's true, Colonel, that's what I did."

"Now," said the lawyer, "from the appearance of the table in that room was it not evident that Collander was at work on a brief—there was a pad on the table before him, and the papers in the case of the Bridge Company against the Western Railroad? We know that he was at work on this brief because the case was coming on for a hearing, and because his notes on the pad were in ink and the ink was not dry; isn't that true?"

"Yes," replied the chief of police, "that's true."

"Every paragraph written on the pad," the attorney continued, "was part of an opinion from the eighty-fifth U. S. It was half of a long syllabus of the opinion; he had it about half written out. As I say, the ink was not yet dry on it; it still blurred a little when one rubbed one's finger on it. Now, we see what the man was doing. He was sitting at the table copying this syllabus when he was interrupted; isn't that true, Bobby?"

"IT MUST have been that way," said the chief of police. "Collander must have been sitting there when the thing began."

The Colonel continued. "Collander was killed by a bullet that entered the chest and ranged upward. It was found against the shoulder blade, so flattened that no one could say precisely the caliber of the bullet; isn't that true?"

The prosecuting attorney interrupted.

"There's nothing in that, Colonel," he said. "The surgeons say that the bulk of the bullet was about the size of a thirty-two caliber; there was the pistol on the floor from which it had been fired."

The big attorney made a gesture with his hand. "Let us adhere precisely to the truth," he said, "and the truth is that the bullet was so battered that no one can say accurately what caliber it was. Doctor Huff says that he thinks it was a thirty-two, but he also says that he does not know."

The prosecuting attorney persisted.

"But there on the floor was the pistol from which two bullets had been fired."

"Ah!" said the attorney. "Now, we have got to the very point by which the innocence of this prisoner is established. If two bullets were fired in that room, with the doors and windows closed, and one of them killed Collander, where did the other one go that did not kill him?"

He turned to the chief of police. He advanced toward him. His voice became low—became confidential—as of one who discusses a secret, covert, hidden matter with another.

"Now, Bobby," he said, "I directed you to go over that room from top to bottom

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"Just a moment, Bobby," the lawyer interrupted. "I want to be absolutely certain about this: there could be no mistake about the fact that you heard two shots; isn't that true?

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carefully, every inch of it, precisely as it stood after you had sealed the doors and windows. For what purpose? To determine, Bobby, what became of that other bullet. A bullet can not vanish. It can not disappear. It has to hit something. Did you find what it hit?"

The chief of police moved in his chair. His figure lost some aspect of its assurance. He became perplexed. His voice took on a sort of apology. He looked at the judge, at the prosecuting attorney, at the jury.

"I have to tell the truth about it," he said finally. "I couldn't find where that other bullet hit. I never could find it."

"You went over everything in the room, didn't you?" continued the Colonel. "You went over it with Doctor Huff and with Scalley. You went over every inch of it."

"Yes," replied the chief of police, "we went over every inch of it."

"And you didn't find the mark of the bullet?"

The chief of police addressed the judge.

"No, Your Honor, we couldn't find it. It's a mystery what became of that other bullet. The person who shot at Collander must have missed him the first time because only one bullet hit him and there were two shots fired. I heard 'em, and there were two empty cartridges in the pistol. Whoever killed him must have shot at him and missed him. But if they did, that bullet had to hit something in the room; and it never hit anything in the room!"

"Ah!" The attorney's voice returned to its normal volume. "You couldn't be mistaken about that, Bobby?"

"No," the chief of police answered, "there can't be any mistake about it. I went over it too carefully, too many times; there's no bullet-mark in that room."

He said it with an energy of final decision that dismissed the question conclusively.

The court-room was now awake. The packed audience leaned forward. It had now a deep, new interest; the interest of a doubt; the interest of a mystery.

Colonel Armant closed his case at this point.

He had, now, the two elements for which every attorney labors in a desperate criminal defense; a doubt and an involving mystery. The doubt he would build up in his argument, and for the mystery he had the solution ready.

But he was too wise, too greatly a master of effect, to disclose that solution before the proper dramatic moment. He had no intention to permit the attorney for the state to discount his explanation in the opening speech to the jury.

It was after that, when in his argument he had prepared the way, when his defense had been carefully built up, and the state of feeling in the court-room—tense and expectant as before a closed door, that he uncovered the solution, like one who, with a magnificent gesture, flings that closed door open.

McNagel could find no bullet-mark in the room, because there had been no shot in the room.

The assassin, on that night, had called Collander to the door; he had gone with his own pistol in his hand. And there with the door open, looking out on to the porch, the shooting had occurred.

It had been an instantaneous duel.

Collander had fired twice and the assassin simultaneously with the last report of the pistol. It was this third shot that the prisoner had distinguished.

How clear it was!

Collander was fearful of this thing. He was looking for it to happen; and so he went to the door with the weapon in his hand, and he fired on the instant the menace appeared.

The lawyer reenacted the dramatic scene; the man feeling the impact of the bullet, sprang back, closing the door, then he staggered, the pistol fell out of his hand, he tried to reach his chair, but the wound was mortal, and he lurched, falling behind it, as they had found him.

The confirmatory facts were now conspicuous; no mark of a bullet in the room, and the range of the bullet upward from the assassin standing on the ground below the decedent!

It was an impressive piece of tragic acting. And under its vivid dominance the jury believed themselves to look on at the very act of murder. They saw the thing as it had happened, and the stamp of the attorney's vigor impressed it as with a die.

No array of subsequent argument could dislodge it.

Not guilty, was the verdict within an hour.

Colonel Armant and the now vindicated prisoner went out of the court-room, down the steps and into his office in the basement of the court-house.

The woman sank relaxed into a chair.

"Colonel," she said, "you saved me to-day!"

The lawyer looked at her as in surprise.

"Why no," he replied, "I didn't save you to-day!"

His voice descended into its long dwindling whine.

"I saved you, Ellen, when you asked me to save you—while McNagel ran to fetch you. I put back into the bookcase the law book from which Collander was copying out the citation for his brief—the law book that he held up before him to ward off your first shot—the bullet-hole is in the cover of it.

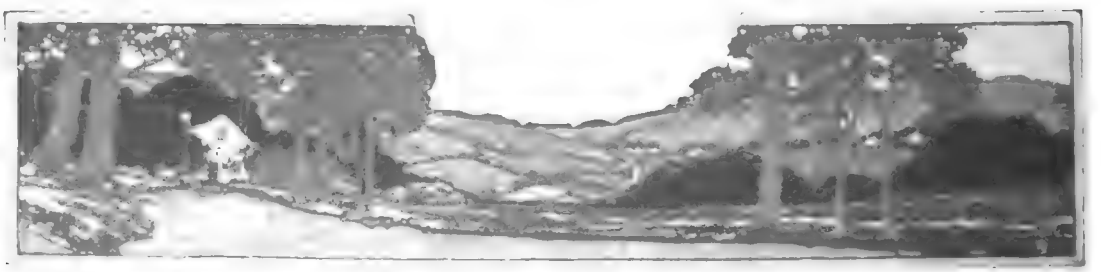
"Ellen," he said, "if you had fired down over that book the second time instead of up under it, as you did, I don't know how in hell I could have managed to clear you!"

One Day in Summer

By David Morton

THIS singing summertime has never done
With afternoons all gold and dust and fire,
And windy trees blown silver in the sun,
The lights of earth, her musics and desire;
But day by day and hour by lighted hour,
Something beyond the summer earth and sky
Burns through the passion of a world in flower,
Some ghostly sense of lovers thronging by.

And I have thought, upon this windy hill,
Where bends and sways the long, dream-troubled grass,
That I may know the heart-beat, tender still,
Of gone, forgotten lovers where they pass.
Their love, too long for one brief life to hold,
Beating and burning through this dust and gold.



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PROSE OR WORSE

(Lyons, New York, Republican)

For a number of years he had led a retired life, while his wife conducted the well-known Hough boarding-house in Broad street.

Everybody works but——

(Ackley, Iowa, World)

Matt O'Keefe, member of the undertaking firm of O'Keefe & Towne, had the direction of the funeral. Mr. O'Keefe is one of the Waterloo boys grown up who carries considerable natural sunshine along with him and casts it along the highway. Monday in particular, it was a pleasure to get a glimpse of his smiling countenance.

I'm just dying for a little sunshine.

(Scottsbluff, Nebraska, Star-Herald)

Cloud Burst last night at Sunrise.

And many people coming back from their noon lunch got soaked.

(Cicero News)

Never did the town hall present a more animated scene, bubble over with brighter prospicence, wear a more satisfied smile over an enviable record, and a renewed plebescite of confidence and power, nor return smile for smile, compliments, courtesies for courtesies, melliflu-ous words for dulciferous agraphs than on last Monday evening on the occasion of the adjourning sine die of the old board of trustees and the induction of new members-elect and the inauguration of the new board. The courtesies of gentlemen made room for the many lady friends present, whose handsome gowns, radiant smiles and healthful and cheerful aura set off the banked and floral tributes, making it a typical "garden of gull."

***Somebody's* cellar is still holding out.**

(Theatrical Want Ads., Windsor, London)

Engagement Wanted.—Small part, such as dead body or outside shouts.

Modest violet.

(New York Tribune)

Mrs. Tatum greeted the journalists with a smile. Her sister wore a blue dressing-gown.

Well, that's a fair average.

(Elgin, Illinois, News)

For Sale—Cheap, on account of discontinuing the fresh meat business, 2 nice horses.

Dead or alive?

(Chicago American)

Miss Darling was Youth personified, gowned as she was in a Spring costume of gray, with a blue hat partially covering her dainty patent leather pumps.

Some high stepper.

(Victor, New Mexico, Herald)

For Sale—Nine fall pigs. Will sell in pairs. John Chisholm.

Boy, bring me pencil and paper.

DO YOU BELIEVE IN SIGNS?

Cleveland, Ohio: "*Pleasant Burns, dealer in Coal and Ice.*"

On West Madison Street, Chicago: "*Hose for Thirsty Lawns.*"

In a Kansas City theatre: "*Please report any act or omission on the part of our employées.*"

In a South Haven, Michigan, resort: "*Ladies are requested not to wear dressing-sacks in the dining-room.*"

In a Richmond, Virginia, laundry: "*Three collars for 5 cents, you tote.*"

In a Davenport, Iowa, photographer's window: "*Bring the babies and get a large one free.*"

In a St. Louis hotel: "*Mr. Bedsworth, Clerk now on duty.*"

On Madison Street, Chicago: "*Sandwiches, plain or breaded.*"

In Chicago: "*You have never seen bargains like this before and you never will.*"

(From the Milwaukee Railway System)

Machinist H. E. Spalding is back to work again after being in the South for his wife's health.

***There's* consideration for you.**

(Lafayette, Indiana, Journal)

Quite a number assisted Warren Harshman in butchering Wednesday. John Carrol and Ed Calson assisted Dan Lawson in butchering Tuesday. Mr. and Mrs. William Horn, and E. E. Byers, assisted Warren Reeves with his butchering Thursday. Mr. and Mrs. Alva Parvis, of Conroe, assisted Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Holst with their butchering Tuesday.

Grove Barker and Edward Andrew butchered Tuesday. Floyd Andrew assisted in the butchering.

Those that assisted Mr. and Mrs. Frank Roth butcher Tuesday, were Mr. and Mrs. John Stingley and son, Leonard, of Lafayette, Mr. and Mrs. Glen Brandt, Mr. and Mrs. Elmer McCoombs, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Weaver, Guy and Robert Warwick, Mrs. Ella Burkhalter, of Edna, and George Robbins.

The Village cut-ups.

(Marysville, Missouri, Tribune)

A correction we wish to make. In the last Thursday items we said that a son had arrived at the home of Albert Kellogg. Now, as some trouble has been caused by it, we want to explain and correct anything that has caused trouble, as we do not want the blame. Neither do we want the editor blamed. We were told by parties who had received the information from Mrs. Kellogg's folks and so we thought what we wrote was correct, but as there is no limit in it, we wish to say that we do not write anything to hurt any one's feelings or mean any harm, but we certainly will have to know that what is reported to us will be the truth, as we do not like to have our heads bit off over the phone. So we want the parties to know that we were misinformed and not blame us, but the right parties and all will be well.

All right, we'll let it go at that.

(Waterloo, Iowa, Courier)

Wanted—Waitress, lady preferred.

Getting more and more particular every day.

(Des Moines, Iowa, Register and Leader)

But the wonder about Ruth St. Denis is that subtle, almost mystic personality, that makes the things her body is saying so vivid. It gives one the feeling of looking at an old purple Japanese design or a bit of corroded Indian metal work.

Time to call in an oculist.

(Nebraska City Press)

An 18-foot ladder upon which James Kastner and William Franks were standing at the Bradley-Catron fire broke, letting the men fall a distance of more than twenty feet.

It *seemed* that long.

(Flagstaff, Arizona, Sun)

Mrs. Geo. T. Mason wants a few music pupils to fill vacancies. Special attention to finish and style. Sucking calves or poultry taken in exchange. Friday and Saturday at 317 Railroad avenue.

No, I guess I'd prefer the calf.

(Waterloo, Iowa, Times-Tribune)

A *Times-Tribune* reporter had that rare privilege yesterday afternoon. He had previously seen her in the films; he had seen her on the stage. But not until he met and talked with her did he realize the rich beauty of her face and hair and eyes, the symmetry of her splendid figure, the softness of her voice or—and more than all else—the genuinely womanly feelings and emotions that are hers. Beautiful blue eyes, she has, as blue and as changeless as Colorado sky. Her hair is golden as a harvest field in October, her teeth are white as the pearl that shines in the bosom of a shell peering up at you from the ocean's depth, and her face is as fair as a day in June, and as full of grace and charm as the face one sees in dreams. Perfect her features, her eyes, her lips, her hair, but even these would not complete the magnetism of her charms were it not for her dimples.

What did you say her phone number was?

(Oshkosh, Wisconsin, Northwestern)

Wanted—By married couple, first-class room and board together in modern home, on the North Side.

***Some* old-fashioned people still left.**

(Joliet, Illinois, News)

Born, to Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Crosiatto of East Brooklyn Tuesday night, a five-pound boy, weighing nine pounds.

Just an average youngster, as 'twere.

(Toluca, Illinois, Star-Herald)

For Sale—Horse, buggy, and harness. Family broke. For further particulars call on Rev. G. A. Schmidt.

Yes, I know what it is to live on a minister's salary; dad was one.

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The Pack

By F. St. Mars

THE little-known African wild dog is so ferocious a beast when aroused that every animal in the jungle world fears him—even the lion. In this story Mr. St. Mars is writing fiction, but it is fiction based on the same accurate personal observation displayed in the author's several serious works on Natural History.

LYCAON drove his fangs deep in, flung round, and was away again on the instant. There was no time for thought; pity was out of the question. He had enacted the unspeakable thing—struck down a female of his kind. It was all over in an instant, but her blood, as it spouted, was upon his shoulder even now, just where he could not lick it off. And more, he had led the pack on a "dud" scent, while he broke back to his own selfish antelope "kill." Retribution would be swift even for a land in which retribution is never slow. Dash that female's whiskers! If she had not trailed him back to his secret "kill," or come upon him so suddenly even—and she in whelp too. His snap had gone home before he thought—startled; and she, with the rally cry upon her thin lips, had gone down. Heaven help him if she lived—a she dog always repays. Anyway old Picta, the leader of the pack thirty-nine strong, would have every nose to his trail inside thirty-nine breaths, and he full fed! Devoutly Lycaon cursed that greed which led to guzzling over his lone "kill."

Nothing that lives can outdistance the wild hunting dog of Africa, even in Africa, the land of swiftest feet. *Nothing else.* Lycaon had leisure to ponder that fact as he scudded through the tinder-dry, crackling grass. His own kind alone could do it if some of the pack were empty and he, as he was, full. And some were empty, he knew.

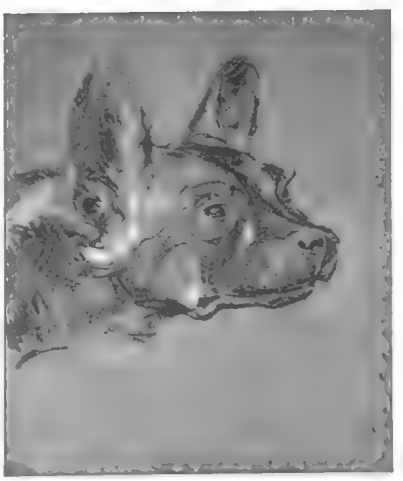
OF COURSE he had his strength. A giant among wild dogs, a super-beast of his clan, over two and a half feet tall, weighing well over sixty-two pounds, none seemed to know why he had never claimed leadership of the pack; unless indeed it was the kink of his always intolerant temper that incited opposition in the others. *He* could stand off any two or three of them alone and single-fanged, but for how long? How long before the pack, encircling at full gallop in the horned Zulu *impi* formation, had him down from behind? This, also, he had leisure to ponder as he threaded the open acacia scrub, jumping a streaking green mamba cobra, whose bite alone is a ten-minute death, by the way.

With long, smooth strokes of his greyhound-like legs, Lycaon threw the miles over his shoulders as a railway-train slips back telegraph-posts.

Unlike many of the wild folk when hunted, Lycaon did not run in a circle, any sort of circle, even a rough one. That way lay death, with *those* hunters on his trail. How many times had he himself cut across the arc, and so reached his prey easily, when hunting antelope and ostrich? No circles for him, thank you; but he ran with a plan, all the same.

At first, at any rate, it seemed as if Lycaon had lost his head, was committing a disastrous blunder. *He was running upwind*—the interminable wind, sometimes hot, at times piercingly cold, of the *nvika*. This fact seemed to throw his life away; for the pack, with his peculiarly strong scent blowing back in their faces, had no need to drop nose and trail slowly, but could race at full speed with heads up—all the pack.

Nevertheless Lycaon held his own; at least, it seemed that he did, for those wild hounds of the wilderness ran utterly mute, and there was no telling how close up or far back they were, save once, when Lycaon, stopping to look back from a sun-blistered, baboon-infested *kopje*, saw heads, black heads, grinning, strangely hyena-like, jumping at intervals far away above the seared grass. That, however, was his sole check. There is no time for stops or dawdling when the wild dog of Africa is after you; and it was a case of full speed all the time for Lycaon, till the endless passage of the fire-stunted trees, the steady sweep-back of the rasping grass, the glimpses—seen and gone again—up long vistas of open ground, of startled antelope or zebra, flying his path, or piled boulders radiating heat like an oven, became dizzying.



A hyena-like animal at the very end of the dogs.

The sun was falling away, burning the piled and tumbled clouds in reeking, blood-red contusions of flame, and straight into the vortex of crimson Lycaon was racing, a smooth, gliding, machine-like figure, his black, tan and white lean form coal-black in silhouette against the glare. And behind his back, night and his enemies raced after him together.

SUNSETS are short in those latitudes; the twilight too; but neither so short that, having regard to the terrific pace necessary for Lycaon to keep ahead of the pack running at the wind's teeth, the truth could long remain hidden. The mystic fires of sunset were becoming real flames of night. The horizon was alight, leaping, crackling, roaring dully like a hungry beast. The clouds were hurrying smoke-banks, choking and thick. What had appeared to be in the sky was now upon earth. The bush was ablaze—aye, ablaze, my friends—and Lycaon, the hyena-like black-faced, long-legged wild dog, was streaking straight toward it in the eye of the wind, as it toward him on the wings of the wind, at the speed o' knots.

Such sudden bush-fires Lycaon had often seen; perhaps at times had feared. They came, started by savages, belike, for the sake of the new growth to feed their cattle with; started by more savage savages, to drive foes away; started, at times, by God knows what; started, anyway, and hurrying athwart the distances by night, small fires and tremendous conflagrations; but mostly, if one were keen of eye and swift of foot, there were gaps to dash through, places where the flames found no food, or were mysteriously stopped. And always there were rivers and streams—*if* one knew where, and they not dried up!

Lycaon knew all this, was breaking speed records now to take advantage of it, aiming, unconsciously perhaps, to cut through before a gap closed and stopped the pack. Instinct or deliberate planning, no matter

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The darkening horizon was alight from end to end, and night and day and Nature and the world, it seemed, had gone mad together.

what the name you tag to it, the act was the same—and it failed.

But it was only when Lycaon got close—too close, perhaps—that he realized the fact. No ordinary bush-fire, this that confronted him, but a raging sea of flame, a roaring, crackling, racing flood of fire. The darkening horizon was alight from end to end, and night and day and Nature and the wild, it seemed, had all gone mad together. Zebra, hartebeeste, wildbeests, gazelles; buffalo and rhinoceros; ostrich and jackal; even lion; snakes, lizards, and interminable insects—the air seemed as full of these, and others, as it was of choking smoke and flying ash.

If Lycaon survived being trampled into the earth by the stampeding, stare-eyed, maddened wild folk, it was not for want of narrow escapes. A score of zebra, thundering like a cavalry charge, missed him by inches. Fifty red-eyed wildbeests, tails and manes flying, at racing speed, all but swept him to eternity. He slipped between a rhinoceros's legs, and felt the ground shake a moment later as he rolled over barely clear of the horns of a heaving herd of buffalo. Then he relaxed, spring fashion, and shot into the air, letting by beneath a fifteen-foot python, all painted and glistening and smelling to Hades.

By this time the heat was intense. In another three minutes sparks were beginning to glimpse past—one burned his coat. The rolling smoke burned too, almost as much, and—Lycaon discovered himself alone with these things and the intolerable glare.

The wild dog, without checking, flung around right-pawed, so to say, and raced, as a greyhound might, along the wall of advancing flame, seeking a let-through. No such thing was possible, however, to anything without wings. So he again turned, bending back, his pied coat already scorched; and at last, flinging up the white tip of his bushy tail before the angry glare of the flames, did the thing that had been in his heart at the first, before the fire came.

He tore back *downwind*, on a line parallel with his own trail he had come by; and this time, straining, wild-eyed, foam-flecked, putting out the uttermost last ounce of speed that was in him. He almost flew—and that after already so long a race! 'Twas a white light upon the terror the slouching, lean, big-eared, short-muzzled wild dog wields in the wild—who could face such a fury of speed at the climax of so many miles.

So far and cleverly had the canine brain of this animal—who was at the very ends, as it were, of the dogs, and more hyena-like than any—worked: two distinct plans of escape evolved in swiftest motion. But the canine brain stopped there: it could not know that the fire quickly raced over the spot where he had turned back; that the pack, also, had been stopped by the fire before reaching the turn in his trail, and were now galloping furiously back by

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the way they had come, no longer hunting him, but hunted by packs of flames.

He had calculated they would follow his trail as it turned now downwind. Being no longer blown toward, but from, them, they must drop their noses to puzzle his line out. This meant slower hunting, and if he could only go fast enough, his scent might "stale out" before they could pick it up. He did not, could not, guess that the pack were at that moment actually tearing back almost level with him, and only a few hundred yards away, gradually converging toward him, as the speed of the flames increased and compelled them to head, as he was doing, toward the only sanctuary they knew of from bush-fire—the river.

Thus it happened that the pack fell in with Lycaon's trail again by accident, and followed it, since it went their own way, all the more swiftly now because of the scorch and the dry, roaring glare, increasing every moment, behind them. If they had been any other associates of the great Dog Tribe, hound or wolf, or jackal even, they must have given tongue upon hitting the perfectly fresh trail again, and so Lycaon would have heard, and known what had happened. But they were not. They were the slope-backed, mottled, gnome-faced, mysterious hyena-dog of the land of the Sphinx, and ran absolutely mute when hunting from start to finish, at all times, as now.

Thus, therefore, the first Lycaon guessed at them was when, checked for a moment to let by a stream of mixed antelope and zebra, demented with terror, he jumped above the grass, terrier-in-hay fashion, to look back, and found that his jump coincided almost exactly with that of old Picta, the leader of the pack, not two hundred yards away. And recognition was mutual and instant. Those sharpest of sharp, intelligent canine eyes could not have missed one another half a mile away even, let alone two hundred yards.

If, however, Lycaon's giant size gave him strength beyond the average full-grown dog of his species, it had another advantage, too: it gave him speed. Those long, loose legs seemed tireless; those lungs in that deep chest proof against a burst. The beast's stamina was amazing: a Derby winner could never have held before him even. One beheld him as a streak threading the open bush, a mysterious intermittent flicker of black-and-tan. Terror of being burned alive lent the naturally fleetest antelope wings; Lycaon passed them; and the ostrich, holder of all records, also. It was his boast, the boast of all adult male African wild hunting dogs, that nothing that ran lived that he could not tire out in the end. Fate's sarcastic irony was making him prove it now—*reversed*. And his foes behind almost forgot the scarcely less terrible death that pursued them in the frenzied joy of pursuing him.

LYCAON came to the fourfold avenue of doum-palms that flanked the river with one hundred yards to spare—not a foot more, I swear it. And have you watched a lion cover one hundred yards in charging *you*? Just time for two well-aimed shots, as I count it. The hunting dog-pack came quicker than a charging lion, much quicker.

Lycaon had no time to search up or down stream for a shallow ford or halfway island. He glanced back with his intelligent eyes for just one second, took in the pack gnashing after him, the flames gnashing after the pack, and slipped in. Once in, he swam, boldly and at top strain, straight across.

It was noticeable—his silent entry; noticeable, too, his hurry and straight course. Any fairly broad, deep stream will normally stop a wild-dog pack. The reason is obvious—the crocodiles. And the antelope know that: the hunted buck makes almost invariably riverward.

The lurking but invisible crocodiles noted him, of course, as they notice everything. Only, the horror of their name does not normally lead them to expect any beast less in bulk than buffalo, or mad, to cross a deep river boldly. Thus, instant as they are, their slow brains tricked them. They had not time, or had not time to think and act. Before they realized, before horny, green-scummed eyelids ceased blinking and scaly bodies sank stern first, or had gathered for attack, Lycaon was shaking showers of red diamonds in the red glare off his short, dappled coat upon the sandy shore of the far bank. And that coat, oddly enough, was on end. He had never run a risk like that before. Terror of "crocs" had been sucked in by him at the breast, so to speak, but not terror of his own kind or of fire.

Then he spun about, grinning, gibbering, chattering obscene things at the opposite bank. In that hell's illumination his black, short, huge-eared countenance looked diabolical—he more nearly resembled a gnome than ever.

And the pack danced and grinned and gibbered back at him, and that was worse than ever—in *that* light, in that dry, harsh, all-pervading roar of fire. It was not a scene of this earth at all. It was demoniacal, fiendish.

Lycaon turned again, and the chatter of defiance, the gibber of hate, the bark of anger, dried up and died upon his lips. Facing him, not a yard away, was the bitch, *the* she wild dog, the gleam of the wound on her shoulder as red as the angry glare of the flames.

She was staring straight into Lycaon's face, and through it. Her eyes were alight and peculiarly lit with something almost uncanny, as if in that hour, and that hour alone, she had revealed almost the glimmerings of a soul. She seemed to see heaven, as a lost pet dog sees into the door of a luxurious room. Then she spurned upon her heel and vanished into the black gloom of an ant-bear hole, enlarged—by herself—secretly, for her own very private and urgent purposes.

AS FOR Lycaon and his pursuing pack and the pack's pursuing flames, they might have been off the earth—and yet, she had seen him *and* recognized him. Even *he* knew that. And Lycaon, the giant, was groveling before her as a puppy grovels before a mastiff. Afraid? Of her? No, by thunder. Afraid of the hand of God that had touched her, and the light of the knowledge of it, that shone out of her cruel eyes, in that hour.

"And for all those about to become mothers——"

Lycaon whipped around upon his hind legs and returned to the bank of the river, *and* waited, rigid as a statue cut in red.

Old Picta was coming across, the pack behind him. He had long waited a chance, with the pack behind him, to get Lycaon down. Otherwise, he knew, Lycaon might one day usurp leadership, and get *him* down—without the pack behind him. Moreover, they, hating the act as they did, knowing the risk as they did, and exaggerating it with all the nervous, high-strung glimmer of imagination possessed of all dogs—they *had* to cross. The fire was behind them.

But there were swirls, slighter and other than the swirls made by the wild dogs, and farther off. The crocodiles had got over surprise; gathered their horrible cold-blooded wits; were beginning to move. And when crocodiles move, and choose to move, they *can* move—things happen with electric rapidity, usually awful things.

What followed was not idyllic; but that was the crocodiles' fault, not mine.

Old Picta got across—but *that* was certainly not the crocodiles' fault. The pack did not get across.

In that hell's illumination his black, short, huge-eared countenance looked diabolical.

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Old Picta, the leader of the wild dogs, swam. My word! but that old reprobate swam, a good many times faster than he ever knew he could swim, crazily. And as he swam his big round ears turned back—of course, back—heard—there was absolutely no need to see—as it were a moan of terror, broken by a single canine cry, rise just behind him, above the tremendous elemental, dry "ar-r-r-gh!" of the flames—rise, and fall, and die.

And that was the pack dying; the pack going under; the pack being pulled down; the pack flinging up its head, pawing wildly at empty air, as it were in supplication to Heaven, and sinking, tail first and struggling horribly, from sight. No, crocodiles are not nice. For one thing, you practically never see them, as these were never seen. For another, they gather too quickly. Not all died thus. Some turned back in time to land on the flaming bank, and drop, one by one, in the reek of the smoke, so that for them, too, death came all the same.

OLD Picta nearly lifted himself out of the water in his anxiety to get ashore clear of the débâcle. He did not know it, perhaps, but the pack owed it to the passage of Lycaon and himself that had set the horrible horny saurians awake and alert.

In spite of the wet, old Picta's neck-ruff was setting up on end when he landed. That was fear. Then it was rage. The lean beast—almost entirely black, he was, except for his white tail-tip, for wild dogs vary extraordinarily in color, within limits—waited no more than to shake himself before getting to work. If he had got out of the fire and the frying-pan, he was now in the pot certainly. And he knew it. That red-lit, lean statue, Lycaon, waiting for him within five yards on the lip of the bank, must be wiped out utterly before Picta could clear his own life from bond, so to speak.

From that moment things moved too quickly to take in. There was an impression of old Picta on his hind legs, raging in at Lycaon with his jaws open; of the latter's gaunt form reared to meet him; of the white snicker of fangs, as it might have been steel blades; of fur here and there, some of it flying; of scarlet tongues and jaws, and something else a more angry red, or was it the red light of the raging flames from the opposite bank? Bodies, inextricably mixed, seemed as if caught in a whirlwind. Then a sound like the snapping of a stick on an iron rail. Then a peculiar whimpering sound. Then Picta standing alone on three legs, his tongue licking a broken fourth—the "off fore." *That*, as the pack well knew, was Lycaon's trade-mark. Taller than his fellows, when he reared to fight he kept his throat out of the way and chopped downward—the terrible chop of the wild dogs—at the leg.

Circling rapidly and lithely skirmishing, as he loved to fight, Lycaon watched his chance. His countenance, hyena-like, black and by no means sweet at any time, was now diabolical with a terrible gash. He must repay it. He did. He was in, quick almost as a snake, flinging himself at the foe almost bodily. Chop—and he was out again. Thus wild dogs slay their prey; their foes also if they wait.

Old Picta could do nought else but wait. To turn and run with a broken leg and Lycaon at the back of one were madness indeed. Nor could he chop back; Lycaon had the outer circle, the maneuvering advantage. Old Picta could only pivot and meet each lightning rush. Some he did not meet, and they proved fatal in the end. At last he nodded—'twas just as if he drowsed—from loss of blood. In a second he was on his back, with Lycaon at his throat. One wrench, and—the end.

Lycaon moved slowly down to the river, all aglare, like a mirror, in red streaks. He, too, was red in streaks, and in need of drink. He chose a sandy shallow this time, and even there a crocodile scented blood and grounded in trying to get him.

Then he lay down in a thorn-bush, terrified at the heavy tread of a lion. His pack had, in the daytime, more than once chivvied a lion, decrepit and weak from hunger; but on dark nights they huddled together in the densest thickets, fearing the mighty death they could not see.

At the first streak of dawn, while yet the strange bush cuckoos were calling "Hoo-hoo!" one to the other, Lycaon stretched himself, and, from sheer force of habit, gave the lone, long rally-cry of the wild dogs, itself like the second syllable of a cuckoo's call—"Hoo-hoo!"

None answered.

None were left alive to answer.

The pack had been wiped out, and there was no other pack. Wild dogs hunt in a round over an immense area—fifty miles this one—and take months to do it. No other pack shares their "county" with them. At most, they overlap semi-occasionally.

Lycaon slouched away through the dank burned-out dawn. He knew where to look, and surprised the herd of graceful lyre-horned impalla antelope coming down to drink—on his side of the river, of course; the other side was a blackened waste.

The impalla went off almost like a covey of frightened birds, leaping high over one another's backs—wonderful. To follow their streaking retreat through the stabbing thorn-bush seemed a task past the hopeless. Lycaon followed it. Nay, he did more. He picked out the finest buck, lord of the herd, and ran him down by fair heel and toe tracking. Even after the buck swam the river, too, for Lycaon knew of the ford farther down by which the female wild dog must have crossed.

He spurted up to his quarry, chopped, and fell back. He repeated the process again, and yet once more. 'Twas villainous work, but the only way he knew.

In the end the grand chestnut buck—the most beautiful of all antelopes—came to bay, but too late. He was already weak from loss of blood and was soon down.

Again, from force of habit, that rally-cry rang out upon the dawn-wind, hurrying to unbar the gates of day and let in the impatient sun. "Hoo-hoo!" The desolate, deep call poured out upon the immemorial wilderness calm, and again there was no answer.

Then Lycaon fed—fed, as he always did, like a famished beast, bolting his food furiously, as one that had not tasted food for days. Like hyenas, wild dogs must be cursed with a terrible, insatiable, gnawing hunger that will not be still.

The lean beast waited no more than to shake himself before going to work.

ROBED and radiant, gold and splendid, the sun met Lycaon slouching back by the way he had come, lugging along an enormous lump of venison that dripped by the way. He was not a sweet sight, but he was, for once, doing right. He returned to the den of the female wild dog.

He met her, crawling down for a drink, tongue lolling, weak, famished, fever in her evil eyes. He dropped the meat and watched her drink; and in the silence, broken only by her steady lap-lap-lap-lap, he heard, and hearing, stiffened from head to foot, a faint, faintest of faint, weak, puny whimpering, from the den.

Then the female crawled back, snatched up the meat, made a face at him, and passed down into the dark; while the whimperings greeted her.

And Lycaon, after watching for a long breath, turned away slowly. Slowly, in the warm sun, choosing a soft bed, he lay down. He stretched his long limbs. He sighed as dogs do when well content. He fell asleep. His work was done. He had founded a new pack. One day, if Allah willed, he would be that pack's leader.

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What the Public Got

By Alexander Woollcott

Little Miss Maddern in the early eighties.

CHIP, the sixteen-year-old heroine, crouching despondent on the high river-bank, saw a ship laden with dignitaries and documents steaming up-stream, when she knew full well that some vengeful criminals had placed a deadly bomb in the river-bed.

"The steamboat is coming!" she exclaimed, "and they've put that thing in the channel to blow her up. Merciful Heaven, what can I do! If I could but reach it! Any shock would burst it and save the boat. But I can do nothing. Oh, Heavenly Father, am I to idle here while innocent lives are butchered?"

As she knelt and clasped her hands in prayer, she was reminded that one of them contained a pistol which she happened to have with her.

"Ah, the pistol!"

In vain one of the aforesaid criminals rushed on with the warning cry, "Away, gal, or you'll be killed!"

"Stand off!" said Chip and fired. He fell. She fired again—this time into the river. Her true aim exploded the bomb. There was a geyser of red and black. The ship was saved. Her sweetheart ran to her side. She swooned into his arms. Curtain.

All of which was but one of many feverish moments in a melodrama called "Fogg's Ferry," and the rôle of *Chip* was played by none other than Mrs. Fiske. It really was through rubbish like this that she made her undisturbed way to *Hedda Gabler* and *Becky Sharp*. It really was such stuff as this which flourished in our theatre forty years ago—presumably before the well-known decline of the stage set in.

FOR when Mrs. Fiske moves out on tour in her new play this fall, it will be just forty seasons since her stellar début. After sundry adventures of the road, it was at Abbey's Park Theatre on May 15, 1882, that little Miss Maddern was introduced to New York as a star, sponsored by young Havlin, who was later to be known in the famous partnership of Stair and Havlin. His ambition was to find another *Lotta*, and he pinned his faith to this red-headed youngster who had been on the stage ever since she learned to walk.

Born of nomad show folks at New Orleans sixteen years before—her real name was Marie Augusta Davey—she had been going to school and playing parts ever since, mostly playing parts. All sorts of parts, from the tenor rôle in "H. M. S. Pinafore" to the crowned child in "Macbeth." As she was of no particular age, the task of appearing as old *Widow Melnotte* in "The Lady of Lyons" when she was only twelve had baffled her not a whit, and as those were thrifty days she would play the blind girl in "The Two Orphans" on Monday and then on Tuesday try to conceal her lengthening legs beneath the short skirts of little *Eva*. So, when she came to Broadway as a star, she was a seasoned old veteran of sixteen.

To the very considerable present-day cult who regard Mrs. Fiske as the first lady of the American theatre, there is an interest both shocked and fascinated in this "Fogg's Ferry" which launched the gingery Minnie Maddern. One votary of the cult, who had long been in curious quest of that mislaid and forgotten script, retrieved it the other day, blew off the dust, and sat down delightedly to reconstruct and revisualize the hoary melodrama as it must have been acted in the grand manner of a day gone by.

Chip makes her first appearance as one of those *gamine* heroines of which Dickens's own blessed *Marchioness* and Bret Harte's *M'liss* were early and popular samples, and which broke out virulently again a few years ago in a deathless work called "Peg o' My Heart."

She is introduced as the daughter of *Fogg*, the drunken old ferryman, and his hard-handed wife, but even the first act is strewn with intimations that they are no parents of hers. Personally she has a sort of feeling that she was born in the deep purple, and *Bruce Rawdon*, whom you could recognize by his name as the villain, is pursuing her because he nourishes the same suspicion.

"Chip can do as she likes for all me," says *Mrs. Fogg*.

"Yes, you old hag," snarls *Rawdon*. "Chip CAN do anything she likes. You are not her mother."

"It—it's a big lie," replies the old hag. "Talk's cheap. Who minds what you say?"

To which a voice from the corner makes answer, "I do." Whereat all turn to see *Chip* herself come forward, sweetly serious. Says *Chip:*

"I am sixteen years old to-day. I'm no longer a child. And mammy, if you are mammy, I'm going to leave the old ferry; leave forever. I know I'm a wild, rough girl, with raising not the best, but I love the old place, love it because it's been *home*. I will still call you mother, until I have better knowledge that you are not than Mr. Rawdon's word. You have been a little hard on me at times, but I forgive it all now, and I can't leave you without a tear. Mr. Rawdon, I don't want even you to think badly of me. I know I'm not a lady, and you don't think me one, but I never yet told a falsehood, or did a mean thing, and I reckon that will count. You called me a lady spite of my rough ways. Now that we come to part, show me you meant it. Tell me, tell me, Mr. Rawdon, if it's only by a sign, that you think I'm a lady!"

So the awed *Rawdon* takes off his hat as the curtain falls, but when it rises again on the garden of a mansion, he is still plotting against her. By some mysterious process the lowly *Chip* has become governess in the mansion and *Rawdon* is darkly threatening her with exposure.

Chip: "What do you know against me?"

Rawdon: "Enough to call the blush of shame to that speaking countenance."

Chip: "That is not true. If you assert that I have ever done or even thought of a shameful act, Mr. Rawdon—you—you lie."

Rawdon: "Not you personally. But disgrace often falls on the innocent. Questionable antecedents, for example. I could reveal something concerning you that would drive you from this house."

Chip: "And show unmanly cowardice. My life, Mr. Rawdon, has been low and hard. I am struggling to climb. I have done so. Now you would drive me back. Don't you feel noble, Bruce Rawdon, fighting a lone girl?"

RAWDON: "I am not quite a cur, Chip. Let us be friends, more than friends. I said I could harm you, not would."

Chip: "Then don't lower me with those I have come to value, and cloud all my poor little sunshine. Mr. Rawdon, if you have such power, I implore you (kneels), do not use it."

Rawdon: "Don't kneel to me, little lady."

At this point and posture, *Blanche*, the "female heavy," discovers them. *Blanche*, who is the daughter of the house, or rather of the mansion, may be recognized by the fact that she is the type that desires

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"action, society, amusement, the *world*," and that she always refers to our *Chip* as "the menial." The sight of *Rawdon* and the menial playing a scene together quite naturally afflicts her.

Blanche (crosses to them in rage): "What is my affianced husband doing with this girl? Why on your knees, my lady? Is he pouring into willing ears his blazing passion?"

Rawdon: "Damnation!"

With this and further complications, it is small wonder that the third act finds the unhappy *Chip* on the river-bank near the old ferry. As *Gerald White*, a poor but noble young law-student, comes upon her there, she is saying to the stars: "They all shun me. Oh, I wish I was dead! Why not end it all? Those dark waters leave no blood-stains. The swift current will carry me far away and none will know my fate."

White: "Chip, rash child, what are you about to do?"

Chip: "Go away, Mr. White. Do. End it all. I'll find peace beneath those waters. There is none for me here."

White: "Fie, Chip. Youth is the age for life, not death. You are discouraged and morbid, and think the world contains no friend . . .

White: "I didn't mean to speak just yet, but this affair precipitates a crisis."

Chip: "What do you mean?"

White: "Mean! Chip? You are to me hope, incentive, aspiration, my one dear lodestone to success. You must be my little wife. Promise."

It was such a play as this which brought Minnie Maddern to Broadway at a time when young William Gillette was playing "The Professor," when "Esmerelda" was the hit of the day, and when the Rialto was still moist from the tears shed at "Hazel Kirke." Was it, you wonder, a fairly typical product of native dramatic authorship? There's no denying that it was. And was the low estate of the craft which that implies realized at the time? Well, turn back to the pages of the New York newspapers of 1882 and read the shrieks of anguish which "Fogg's Ferry" elicited.

"The chief sin which is to be laid against Miss Maddern," said the *Times* bitterly, "is that she has encouraged one more mistaken American playwright. In the abstract, the American playwright is a great enterprise, but we are constantly brought to the hard fact that his pretensions are more visible than his brains. The brainlessness of Mr. Callahan, who is said to be a journalist, is beyond words; it is the brainlessness of nearly all the heavy, empty, dull-witted scribblers who furnish our stage with its oppressive trash."

Yet the *Times* found the brightness of Miss Maddern "like rose dew dropped upon the sting of criticism" and reported "a sparkling humor in her eyes and smile," while the *Sun* burst out as follows:

"She came forward like a new Lotta, young, slender, sprightly, quite pretty, arch of manner, rash in the matter of her stockings, as Lotta always was, and possessed of undeniable red hair. She had not been on the stage a minute before she had jumped on the edge of a table and established with the audience relations of the most agreeable intimacy. Her self-possession is complete. She can sing even worse than Lotta can; but she has a native gift and disposition to her calling that will not be denied expression."

And, indeed, something of the quality we know in Mrs. Fiske must have been apparent in the antics of this wandering soubrette, for in "Fogg's Ferry" and one or two plays which followed it Minnie Maddern accomplished the winning of the West. In Lotta's own land and particularly at the famous old Tabor Grand in Denver she became a great favorite.

That was the theatre of which Eugene Field was forever singing and indeed he haunted it for several seasons as dramatic critic. Out in Denver they still recall the touching speech he addressed to her at a farewell banquet given by the press club, when he moved her to tears with his eloquence and then solemnly presented her with two glass ear-rings, each the size of a chrysanthemum. They still tell how he used to applaud Minnie Maddern till his palms ached, impulsively hurl a bunch of violets at her feet and then when the gratified soubrette would stoop shyly to pick them up, triumphantly yank them back by a thread he had tied on for the purpose.

Well, that was a good many years ago, and it is in Chicago and not Denver that they are planning now the monument to Field. And the Tabor Grand? Yes, that is still standing. This fall will see it transformed into a mammoth movie palace.

Minnie Maddern Fiske of to-day, who will soon celebrate the fortieth anniversary of her début as a star.

IT WAS when she was playing "Fogg's Ferry" in Boston that Miss Maddern caught the eye of two young theatrical managers with no theatres and no one to manage. Each aspired grandiosely to direct her artistic destinies and each tried to say it with flowers. Unfortunately they chanced to make the attempt the same evening at the same hour. And the first was the more aggrieved because he had reason to suspect that his rival had gathered his rosebuds with two dollars mysteriously borrowed from himself. This treachery was too much and fisticuffs ensued there in the alley leading to the stage entrance, to the unconcealed delight of Miss Maddern, who witnessed the ordeal by battle from a safe and impartial distance.

One of the combatants was Charles Frohman. The other was David Belasco.

It so happened that Frohman's path and hers did not cross again until 1912, for both were recluses and saw little of their fellow workers in the theatre. Then, after thirty years, the famous manager, grown heavy and lame, hobbled once more down a stage-alley to pay his respects. It was the Hudson Theatre in New York this time. At sight of her, his eyes twinkled and he asked: "Did you keep the flowers?" Whereat she held out her hands in a gesture of infinite regret and answered:

"Oh, my friend, would that I could have!"

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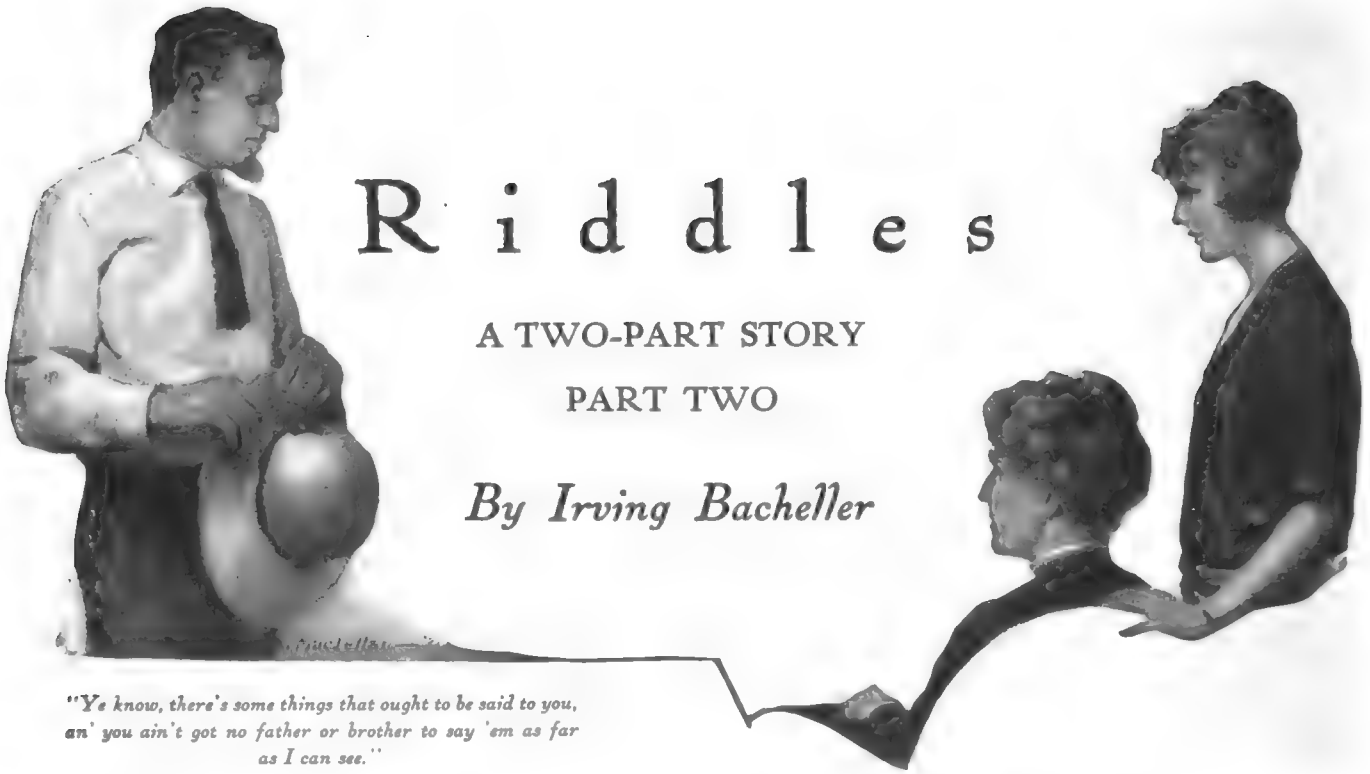

Riddles

A TWO-PART STORY

PART TWO

By Irving Bacheller

"Ye know, there's some things that ought to be said to you, an' you ain't got no father or brother to say 'em as far as I can see."

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

JOHN RIDDLES, a young bachelor and wealthy mill owner, takes advantage of a shut-down due to a strike to go on a novel vacation. Driving out into the heart of the New England countryside, with only a dim idea of his whereabouts, he dismisses his chauffeur and continues his adventure on foot.

He rereads a letter from his friend, David Galt, asking him to look up a girl in the neighborhood, Harriet Martin, with whom Galt is evidently smitten, then hails the driver of a traveling country store, who tells him where the Martin farm is and gives him a lift on the way.

On the road they encounter a singular tramp whose whimsical conversation amuses Riddles to such an extent that he readily accepts the suggestion that they exchange clothes. The quondam tramp immediately adopts the rôle of a genial well-bred Englishman and the name of J. Reginald Travers, whereas Riddles becomes plain Reuben Smith, a farm-hand looking for work.

They accidentally come upon a picnic party in the woods, where Travers's distinguished bearing and ready wit make him popular at once. Riddles, who is assigned to making a fire and attending to the wants of the picnickers, performs the tasks so well that he secures a job as hired man on the Martin farm.

From fellow workmen and gossip in the neighboring village of Coulterville, Riddles learns that the Martin place, like many others in the vicinity, is unprofitable, the help idlers, and the proprietors considered fair game for extortion by workmen and merchants. Incidentally, he learns that Percy Waters, a young ne'er-do-well, is courting Harriet Martin.

At the general store Riddles makes the acquaintance of David Galt, uncle of his friend David, Sam Bullweather, chief clerk in the store, and Henry Bradshaw, the young school superintendent. Soon Riddles, having gained the confidence of his employers, takes entire charge of the farm. About this time he receives a letter from Travers asking for a loan to help sustain him in his new rôle, and replies with a check for a hundred dollars.

Meanwhile, in the village store, discussion of a proposed Take-It-Back Day, a holiday on which all borrowed articles are to be returned and general neighborliness and good-will cultivated, shares attention with the news of Percy Waters's latest drunken escapade.

Chapter Four

The Distinguished Millionaire Gets the Gossip of the War Village and Learns of the Perils which Threaten His Employers—Especially Miss Harriet, in Whom He is Deeply Interested. He Warns Her and is Presently Arrested for Murder. In the Midst of this He Meets Travers and Hears an Astonishing Confession and Loses His Job on Suspicion.

AS THE days passed Mrs. Martin and her daughter relied more and more on the wisdom and efficiency of their new hired man. He had sold the crops and a part of the stock; he had hired a faithful man and wife—the latter to do the cooking. His droll talk was a source of interest and delight to the ladies so that they were glad to make occasion for it.

Late in the week Miss Martin came to Riddles with a circular in her hands. He sat on the kitchen steps grinding a meat knife.

"Here is good news," said she. "Some one has opened a new store in Coulterville. They say it's some millionaire who's trying to kill the profiteers. Just read the program."

Riddles read the circular aloud as follows:

> The Rescue Mercantile Company unlimited (in scope and capital) will open its store in Coulterville July 20th. It will sell for cash only the best meats and groceries at a reasonable margin of profit.
>
> Its purpose is to grapple with the noted highwayman H. C. L. and throw him down and hold and bind him. No commissions to butlers or farm superintendents will be paid, directly or indirectly, by this company. The householders of the community are requested to assist us in this worthy and patriotic service by doing their own shopping. In this fight with new enemies don't be a slacker. All lines of trade and industry are hereby warned that profiteering must stop in Coulterville.

A long list of prices on meats and staple groceries followed and the circular was signed "Henry Bradshaw, Manager."

"I wonder who's doing that," said Miss Harriet. "It's real patriotism."

"It's going over the top, in a way," said Riddles. "I wonder what Erastus Waters will say to that?"

"I'm afraid that his profits have been rather large," the young lady answered.

"I guess they're about as big as the troubles of the rest of us an' if you don't look out you're going to be figured in with the profits," said Riddles as he thoughtfully whetted his knife. "Say, I'm kind o' sorry for you."

"Uncle Sam, Jr., what do you mean?" she asked.

Riddles felt the edge of the knife as he answered:

"Well, ye know, there's some things that ought to be said to you, an' you ain't got no father or brother to say 'em as far as I can see."

"If you know what they are, why don't you say 'em?" Miss Harriet asked.

"May I?"

"O course you may, Uncle Sam, Jr. I have the greatest confidence in your good sense and in your friendly feeling toward us."

Riddles went on with his grinding as he said: "Well, my first subject will be Percy. He's a little like Cawkins. His education has been neglected. He may know a lot

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o' Greek an' Latin, but he's terrible ignorant about—" Riddles paused as he felt the edge of the knife—"Percy," he went on. "I suppose there's been nobody who has dared to give him any schoolin' in that subject. Some day I'm likely to do it."

"We don't know much about his character, and I have told my mother that I thought we needed instruction," Miss Harriet said very soberly.

"Everybody has it but you. Percy is as well known here as the multiplication table. There isn't a grocer's clerk or a scrub-woman in Coulterville that couldn't tell you all about Percy, if they dared to do it. I'm not terribly afraid o' Percy or his father, so if you want it, you'll get instruction, and it'll be as free as the air ye breathe."

"We shall think it a great favor and treat it in confidence."

"I wouldn't do that," Riddles went on. "As I said before, Percy ought to know these things. I told him the other evening that he ought not to be drivin' around half-drunk with kalsomined women, and then be comin' here to see a girl like you. So he knows that much, if he can learn. But he has done worse things. You see, Erastus is kind o' worried about him. He wants to get him off the kalsomine level, an' you are the first step. He's made up his mind that you could take Percy and make a man o' him. His mother tried it and failed. He wants you to be mother number two. Now the fact is, a man that needs a second mother will need several wives. The plan is to buy you for an educator an' pleader an' weeper an' nurse an' general superintendent. There's more to be said, but I guess I've gone far enough."

"Go on, I want to hear it all," said Miss Martin as she sat with her chin upon her hands, a look of interest in her face.

"Why, if Erastus Waters buys this place and you an' your mother live here under his roof, more or less dependent on him, I can see your finish. You don't know what it is to be poor, and I fear that you're likely to know, an' you've never learned how to take care of yourself."

"Uncle Sam, you are a very wise man, but I am sure you are wrong this time," said Miss Harriet. "Mr. Waters used to go to school with my mother. They have been friends for thirty years. His motives are unselfish."

"HE MAY have the motives of an angel; but his history is a little off color. It don't inspire my confidence. Anyhow, before you fall into his hands, it will do ye no harm to have one piece of information that comes purty nigh bein' awful important to you. But I guess I better stop talkin' an' cut some meat for dinner."

"You stay right where you are an' tell me," Miss Harriet commanded. "Dinner can wait. I can't."

"Why the fact is, I'm wearin' your knife out," said Riddles as he went on with the grinding.

"Is that all you have to say!" she exclaimed impatiently.

"No; there's a lot more sayin' to be done, but just now this is all the corn I'm goin' to husk. I know a feller that's in love with ye. He's rich an' good-lookin' an' well broke an' intelligent an' stylish an' sound an' kind an' sixteen hands high—good head an' neck, too. Got more friends than you could shake a stick at. You wouldn't know him from a side o' sole leather; but he's seen ye an' knows all about ye. I used to work for his father an' I know him down to the ground. He's all right. He's crazy to show himself here, but I've kep' him away."

"Kept him away! For goodness sake! Why don't you let me have a look at him? But, of course, he's one of your jokes."

"Look here, Miss Martin, I ain't as smart as some folks, but I come purty nigh knowin' when a joke is a crime. It wouldn't do any harm for ye to take a look at him an' then, if you care to know him better, he can give ye his pedigree an' references. If not, why you can trust him to go about his business. He won't bother ye—*none!* I'll see to that."

"And you say he's well educated and young and good-looking, and—and rich?" Miss Harriet asked with a smile of amusement.

"THAT'S what I say. Got a sheepskin from Yale. That ought to mean a good education. As to looks, he'll have to show the goods, and as to character an' riches, they can be proved easy."

"How romantic!—like the tale of a fairy prince," the young lady exclaimed with a glow of enthusiasm in her eyes.

Their talk was interrupted by the honk and rush of an automobile. Percy's big racing runabout stopped with a loud snort on the drive opposite the kitchen veranda where Miss Harriet sat with the late Mr. Riddles. Young Mr. Waters and a stout, red-faced, rugged-looking man of middle age in a pair of spectacles that seemed to magnify the size of his eyes stepped from the car and approached the little veranda.

"Miss Martin—this is Mr. Simpson, the constable," said Percy. "We have come to arrest your hired man—Reuben Smith."

Mr. Simpson bowed and lifting his gray felt hat mopped his perspiring brow with his handkerchief.

"You—you have come to arrest Reuben Smith?" said the young lady as her face began to turn pale. "What for?"

Simpson cleared his throat and readjusted his spectacles. There was a slight tremor in his hands as he took a document from his pocket, opened the same and began to read in a voice much louder than was necessary:

"The complainant, Robert Fosdick, manufacturer, of said village of Conners, deposes and says that in the course of a strike which began in his works on the first of May, 1918, one Reuben Smith, an employee in said works, had incited his men to sundry acts of violence and that on the tenth of May of the same year, he hurled a brick at one Henry Taylor, an elderly man, going peacefully to his work, inflicting injuries as a result of which Taylor died on the first day of June, 1918."

Mr. Simpson paused.

"I do not believe it," said Miss Harriet Martin.

Then Percy spoke out, saying: "Do you remember on the evening of the picnic at Pine Grove, Mr. Travers told us that he had bought clothes for this man from a traveling pedler and induced him to take a bath and to leave his tramp garments on the river-bank?"

Miss Martin nodded.

"Those clothes are now on a scarecrow in our corn-field near the road. In driving by the scarecrow Mr. Fosdick recognized the hat and clothes, and we were able to tell him the name of their owner, who is undoubtedly this man."

"Say, boy, did you ever see me wearin' that suit o' clothes?" Riddles asked very calmly.

"No," Percy answered.

"Did your father ever see me wearin' 'em?"

"No."

"Then how do you know they was my clothes?"

"By what Mr. Travers said."

"Oh, it's Mr. Travers that knows and not you. Did he go an' point 'em out to ye an' tell ye they was my clothes?"

"No."

"All right. Now I'm ready to be arrested," said Riddles as he continued to whet the knife.

"If you'll get in with us, we'll take ye over to the county seat," said the constable.

"I'll take him in my car, if you please," said Miss Martin. "You can come along with us if you like." Turning to Riddles she added, "I'll get some clothes for you, and be ready in five minutes."

"I shall not need 'em," said Riddles. "I shall return before night."

"You're going to be put in jail," said Percy.

"Am I!" Riddles exclaimed. "Say, boy, if you stop growin' till you see me in jail, you'll be a jack-rabbit as long as you live."

The chauffeur had brought up the car, and the young lady got in with the constable and his prisoner. They rode to Coulterville.

"NOW, Miss Harriet, this is goin' to be a kind of a trial o' your faith in me," said Riddles as he dismounted with the constable at the county seat and bade her good-by. "Ye can give up meat an' drink an' hope an' charity an' life; but faith—if it has a good solid foundation—is a thing to be clung to. If you'll hang onto your faith in me, I'll promise to prove that it's worth havin'."

"I do not expect to lose it," she answered, as she offered him her hand. "But, Smith, we—we have grown rather fond of you. We like you and—and I can't help being worried."

"Don't worry. My record is clean," he assured her. "I'll be back at the farm this evening an' then there'll be some things said."

"I'll wait and take you back with me," said the young lady.

"Don't do that," said Riddles. "I don't want you to get mixed up in this matter. Just leave it to me. I ask it as a favor."

So they parted, and Riddles went with Percy and the constable.

The justice fixed a day for the examination of the prisoner and his bail at five thousand dollars. To the astonishment of the official Mr. Reuben Smith was in no way embarrassed by the amount of the bail demanded. He had the money in his wallet.

"I ain't apt to carry that amount in my pocket," he said. "But I've been too busy to take it to a bank an' so here it is."

The justice went over to the bank with the bills and learned that they were perfectly good, whereupon the amount was deposited with the county treasurer and the prisoner released.

Riddles got a ride back to the Martin

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farm, reaching there about four o'clock. A large new motor-car stood in the drive. Its chauffeur moved the car out of their way. Miss Martin and her mother sat on the veranda with a handsomely dressed gentleman. Miss Harriet came to the kitchen door where Riddles had alighted and shook hands with him.

"Glad to welcome you back home," she said. "How did you get along?"

"I'm out on bail, until the day of my examination, when I shall prove an alibi."

"A friend of yours is on the veranda. Will you come and meet him?"

The friend was J. Reginald Travers who rose and gave his hand to the hired man.

"My good fellow, I am quite surprised by the news of you!" said Travers. "It is—shall I say?—natural that the best of men should have a bit of a fling now and then; but, really, I am astonished that you should have flung a brick at the dear old gentleman."

"I like a little excitement once in a while, but I have never tried to build it out of bricks," said Riddles with a smile.

"Quite so—of course," Travers agreed. "One has only to look into your face to be assured of that. I have heard of your good behavior here, and I need not say how much it has pleased me. If we may have the permission of these ladies I should like you to ride with me to the nearest village." Turning to the ladies he added: "I shall not keep him long."

"Indeed, we are glad that you feel such an interest in him," said Mrs. Martin.

Riddles sat on the top step of the veranda. Evidently Travers was getting along. He was dressed in new and well-tailored garments. Doubtless he wished to make a report and Riddles was eager to learn the nature of it. He had not answered the suggestion of Travers.

"Uncle Sam, Jr., why don't you go with the gentleman?" said Mrs. Martin. "It's getting cool and you had better put on the overcoat that hangs in your closet."

"Thank you," said the hired man as he left them.

"I wish to have a talk with him," said Travers to the ladies. "Perhaps I could add to his comfort by some—trifling gift. I am really quite interested in the fellow. For one of his class he is—I should say—most remarkable."

"WE CAN give him all the clothes he will need," said Mrs. Martin. "I suppose he will talk to you more freely. He is a little shy with us. I wish you could learn where he comes from and something about him. He has a clever way of dodging our questions and we're awfully anxious to know of his past. I think he must be a man of good connections."

"Anyhow, he's a man of very good sense," said Travers. "I confess that I, as well as you, am anxious to know of his pahst. You may be sure I will do my best to enlighten you."

Riddles returned and, with Travers, entered the handsome limousine upholstered with purple velvet waiting in the drive, and drove away.

"Well, old man, what has happened to you?" Riddles asked.

Travers slapped his thigh and laughed. "Really, you know, I'm the luckiest man!"

"Say, please stop this J. Reginald business and get down to straight talk," said Riddles.

"The fact is I don't dare—I've got to keep it up or I shall be ruined. I've married the dear old girl!"

"What dear old girl?"

"Mrs. Pulsifer!"

"Ghosht'almighty!" Riddles exclaimed. "I didn't intend to set a trap for the widow Pulsifer when I gave you that suit of clothes."

"Deah Smith—don't worry! It's a great thing for the both of us. You see she took to me at once. She loves the English." Travers interrupted himself with laughter. "A rahther rusty old dame, but a good heart," he went on. "She owns two big mills—cotton goods. I know something about the game. Made a few suggestions that she liked. We agreed perfectly on the subject of etherial substances. I got a friend of mine to come on from Boston in glad rags. He had a talk with the dear old girl about me. We were married, privately, next day. I have taken hold of the plahnts. They needed me. I shall make good. No more poverty in mine."

"I'm afraid I can not congratulate you," said Riddles. "I fear it will be a short happiness."

"Why?"

"BECAUSE the only safe foundation for happiness is the truth. You have a false name and a false accent."

"Dear Smith, so have you."

"But I'm not using mine for the purpose of catching a wife."

"Are you sure about that?" Travers asked. "If I'm any judge the girl is rather interested."

"Well, if I should ever have the good fortune to marry any one, I should do it under my own name," said Riddles.

"So should I have done; but the name and the accent were assumed, as you know, on the spur of the moment to satisfy my whim, and circumstances have compelled me to keep them. Of course, I shall have to make a clean breast of it one of these days."

"But that friend from Boston!" Riddles exclaimed. "It looks as if you had buncoed the old lady."

"Deah Smith! It's not so bad as it looks. It was only a piece of good advertising. I am aware that my history is not all that it should have been, but my prospects are dazzling. I advertised the prospects. I did it with no intention of deceiving the old lady. I am really trying to be just what I pretend to be—a gentleman. I hope you do not think it so impossible that I have no right to count upon it. As you know, I slipped into the job by accident and I find it most agreeable. I'm going to stick to it. If you will help me, I shall succeed."

"But Travers! It's some contract," said Riddles. "You are wanted for murder, and in the same county where your wife is living."

"Deah Smith! As long as I can keep my courage I am in no danger. Nobody would know me. Anyhow, I have a wall of friends around my sacred form. I have played many parts, but this one of gentleman is my masterpiece because I love the part. You are the only critic I fear. You could ruin the play."

"First, I want to know if you have any other wife," Riddles demanded.

"She is my one and only wife."

"Just what do you intend to do?"

"I'm going to work and I shall make the old lady as happy as I can. She is a good soul. I like her. I've tried all the follies there are, deah Smith, but don't think that I have lost the power to appreciate a refined and decent woman. My mother was just that kind of woman."

In the talk of Travers there was no trace of the playful irony which had flavored his conversation when he and Riddles had first met. There were signs of a rather deep change in him. He was serious. He jumped in and out of his dialect as if, in his earnestness, he were, now and then, forgetting it. Riddles sat thinking as he smoked the cigaret which Travers had given him.

"You're a clever man, but I wonder if you can put this over," said he. "You're in wrong so far—you've built on the sand—but if you really want to be square, I suppose you can move the structure to firm ground. Now I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to keep watch on you. If you go to work and do the right thing by the old lady, I'll do what I can to help you. If you don't—you will find yourself in the hands of the law."

"Deah Smith, I thank you!" Travers exclaimed. "You will see that I have a real gift for the art of being a gentleman."

"There's a little too much art about you, my boy," said Riddles. "Show me the heart of a gentleman and I'm with you."

"My heart might be better, deah friend—I do not need to be reminded of that," said Travers. "Still it is improving. You will acknowledge that, deah Smith, when you know the truth. This morning I saw my brother-in-law, Mr. David Galt, and we had some talk about you."

A sudden, penetrating flash of light fell into the consciousness of the late Mr. Riddles, sweeping every shadow from its remote reaches. In the startling surprises of that conversation he had failed to recall the fact that the impressionable Mrs. Pulsifer was the sister of David Galt. Travers had been quite right in thinking himself lucky.

"YOU are a clever man," said Riddles. "I wonder what was said about me."

"Deah Smith, he told me of the suspicions that were entertained of you. I told him the truth, that I had known you for some time, and had the highest regard for you, and that they were barking up the wrong tree."

"But what am I to do under examination?" Riddles asked. "I shall have to——"

"Tell the truth, I suppose," Travers interrupted. "I'll see that the examination is adjourned for a month. Then it may never have to come off."

Riddles sat in silence while Travers returned the sums he had borrowed.

They were nearing the gate of Mrs. Martin.

"If you don't mind, I'll drop you at the gate," said Travers as he signaled the driver. "I'm likely to be late to dinner, and some guests are coming. Deah Smith, I promise that my behavior will give you no cause for regret."

They parted, and as Riddles entered the gate he met Percy Waters driving out.

"Mrs. Martin wishes to see you at once," said her maid when Riddles entered the kitchen. "You will find her in the library."

In a moment the hired man had found

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her and Miss Harriet. He did not get the pleasant greeting which he had been wont to receive from them. There was a touch of sternness in Mrs. Martin's voice when she said:

"Smith, we must have a frank talk with you. Sit down and tell us where you come from and who you are."

"Mrs. Martin, I thought you wanted help and not history," said Riddles.

"We didn't ask for references, but now I think we shall have to do it," she went on. "I am sure you will agree with me that it is a little unusual for a hired man to be carrying five thousand dollars in his pocket."

"It's a kind of crime," said Riddles. "I'm ashamed of it, and I didn't intend for you to know it. But you see, I had to use that money to keep out of jail."

"IT IS said that you have been a bank robber," the woman continued. "I am told that the man who wore those tramp clothes was a violent socialist and a dynamiter. We have every reason to believe in you, but if you stay here we must know about you. Now that socialist who killed the man with a brick was known as Reuben Smith—there is said to be no doubt of that. I understand you to claim that the tramp's clothes which were left on the river shore were not the clothes which you had worn when you came there. Is that right?"

"It is," Riddles answered.

"Do you know to whom they belonged?"

"I would rather not answer that question just now," said Riddles, and purely out of consideration for Travers.

Mrs. Martin rose from her chair.

"Have you nothing more to say to us?" she asked.

"At present, I've only this to say, I'm about as honest as men average, and if you'll trust me a little while I'll prove it to ye."

"We can not trust you any longer," Mrs. Martin answered. "Reuben Smith, I shall have to ask you to go."

Miss Harriet rose and said, "Mother, no one can make me believe that Uncle Sam, Jr., is not an honest man."

"Miss Harriet, I thank you for your belief in me. Don't let yourself be robbed of it. I have promised that, some day, you shall know that I am as honest as I pretend to be. I ask you to wait until I am ready to tell you. If you let yourself be fooled by all this silly talk, you will never know the truth. Stick to your faith in me—no matter what they say."

Turning to Mrs. Martin he added, "I want to thank you both for all your kindness. I'll never forget it. If you'll please send me down to Coulterville, I'll put on the farm suit an' bid ye good-by."

"Keep the clothes you have on—they'll be more comfortable," said Mrs. Martin.

"No, I'm goin' just as I came," Riddles insisted.

"How much shall I pay you?"

"Leave that to you. Only don't make it too much."

Riddles left them to change his clothes.

"I hate to see him go," said Miss Harriet while her mother was writing a check to the order of Reuben Smith.

"I don't see what else we can do," was her mother's answer.

When Riddles was going out of the door Mrs. Martin said, "We want to thank you for all you have done for us."

"I ain't apt to carry that amount in my pocket," he said. "But I've been too busy to take it to the bank an' so here it is."

"I ain't really had a chance to do much yet," said Riddles. "I'd like to an' maybe I can sometime. We'll see."

"It's a shame that it should end this way," said Miss Harriet.

Riddles stood up straight and answered in his own fashion of speech:

"It isn't ended yet. I'm coming back with the young man and a certificate of good character." With that he left the farm where he had had so many curious adventures.

A mile out of the village the car that conveyed him was stopped by Bradshaw. The latter was in his new delivery truck.

Riddles left the Martin car and got in with Bradshaw, who said:

"I was going out to see you. There's a good deal of excitement in the village. All kinds of wild rumors are flying about and I have heard that they intend to arrest you again to-night. This time it will be for bank robbery. I thought you might be in need of help. What can I do?"

"Thanks. I'm anxious to get home," said Riddles. "Drive me across country to some town where I can buy clothes and hop into a motor-car. I've had enough of this hired-man game to hold me awhile. How's the store?"

"Crowded to the doors all day. It's going to be a godsend to this community. The profiteers are scared. Waters came to-day with a proposition to buy us out. I told him that he hadn't money enough to buy us out."

"That's right. Now, Bradshaw, don't do any talking about me. On the day of the examination I'll show up with some witnesses and prove an alibi, and at the same time wipe out the bank-robber theory."

They drove to Williamstown where Riddles bought a ready-made suit and overcoat. Then, after supper, he hired a motor-car, and set out in the darkness for Belleharbor.

Chapter Five

Riddles out on Bail, gets Home and Presently Returns for Examination with his Friend John Galt and Credentials, and Learns of the Singular Plight of the unsuspected Mr. J. Reginald Travers. He Goes to the Martin Farm in Purple and Fine Linen with his Friend, and Finds that Miss Harriet Has a Mind of Her Own—very like the one under His Hat.

THE next day Riddles, clean-shaven and in a fashion of dress familiar to his friends, entered the office of the factory in Belleharbor. The men had returned to their work.

"What a change!" said Galt as he greeted the master of the works. "You look as fit

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as when you were captain of the football team years ago. Your skin has the hue of copper; your eyes are as bright as a boy's."

"Yes—it's your turn now," Riddles answered. "I see the men have come back."

"They had counted on a fight," said Galt. "When they found that they had no one to fight with, they were disappointed. Suddenly the black pall of prohibition had fallen on the town. It was bone-dry. The gin-mills ceased to grind. They were filled with gloom, anger and profanity. Their proprietors decided to show the people what prohibition meant. The barrooms were dusty, unswept and dimly lighted. Most of their help had been discharged. Nothing but soft drinks at the bar. There wasn't a ripple of excitement on the Bryany deep. The glowing lights, the polished mahogany, the ruby gleams in glittering crystal, the merry toast, the songs of cheer had been followed by the silence and the solemn dusk of the tomb and the uninviting look and flavor of root beer and sarsaparilla.

The enthusiasm of the strikers lacked the stimulation to which it had been accustomed. Home and near-beer and beefsteak could not long support it. At home the kids were bawling and the wife scolding more or less. The wife couldn't strike. Her work had to go on. She was naturally irritated by her man and his friends loafing about the place, and littering the floor, while they were waiting for their meals. They were in the way. Under these circumstances idleness became intolerable. Soon a committee came to me with a perfectly sane and reasonable demand. We had no difficulty in reaching an agreement and the works were opened."

I also have good news to report," said Riddles. "I have found the girl. She is a wonder—good-hearted, witty, modest, beautiful and gifted with common sense."

"And you didn't make love to her?"

"I couldn't, even if I had had a mind to turn traitor."

"Why not?"

"That's a long story and I haven't time to go into it now. I've been playing fool, and some day I'll confess the details."

Within a day a letter from Henry Bradshaw notified Mr. Riddles that their attorney had secured an adjournment of the examination for one month, as its date interfered with the holiday plans of the prosecuting officer.

It was late in August when Riddles set out for Coulterville in his big, new limousine with three guests: Galt, the mayor of Belleharbor, and the president of the First National Bank of that flourishing city. On the way he told them the story of his adventurous holiday. It was often interrupted by merry laughter. In that village up in the hills of New England, Riddles introduced himself and his friends to the prosecuting attorney.

"I AM the late Reuben Smith," said Riddles when they were seated, and I am here to prove my innocence of all the crimes and misdemeanors with which I am charged."

"Here are papers which will prove his identity," said the mayor of Belleharbor as he passed sundry documents to the smiling prosecutor.

The latter examined them hurriedly, arose from his chair and said politely:

"Mr. Riddles, if these gentlemen will excuse us for half an hour or so, I should like to talk with you in my private office."

The two retired to an inner room. The attorney closed its door, and placed a chair close to his own for Riddles.

"I am glad you have come," he began with a smile. "I am in disgrace with the political leaders of this county and you are in a degree responsible for it. Therefore, I feel that I have a right to all the help you can give me. I've got to square myself with old David Galt or go down to posterity as a failure. He calls me a bum prosecutor. Here are the facts as I have them: You were walking on the state road from the west on or about the seventeenth of June. You rode with a pedler to a point on the river shore known as Pine Grove. There you left him for rest. While you were resting a tramp came along. You had a talk with him. He interested you in his welfare to such an extent, that you bought a farm suit from the pedler on his return from Hope Center, and gave the clothes off your back to the tramp. They were good clothes and fitted him. It was a singular act, and a blow to law and order in this county. It enabled a criminal to get away. He was a well-set-up man of about your own build. He had been bathed and shaved and shorn. He probably looked like a gentleman. I presume you loaned him money. The tramp left, and probably got a ride out of this part of the country with some passing tourist. You, seeking exercise and new adventures, had assumed the dress and manners of a hired man and the name of Reuben Smith. What I should like to know is this. How did you chance to take the name of Reuben Smith?"

"The tramp suggested it," said Riddles.

"Was he a friend of yours?"

"No, he was no friend of mine."

"THEN he was a clever man!" the attorney exclaimed with a laugh. "It had been the name under which he had committed a serious crime. Now before you had left the grove, Mr. J. Reginald Travers—a wealthy Englishman—walking for his health, came along and got acquainted with you. Then both joined a picnic party from which you went home with the Martins, and he went with Mrs. Pulsifer and the Cornings. Now, I have a question to ask. Have you any further knowledge of the tramp you befriended? Have you seen him or heard from him since the seventeenth of June?"

"That question I shall not answer unless I am compelled to," Riddles replied.

"Then we shall put you under oath," said the attorney. "Surely, you do not wish to defeat the processes of justice."

"No, but if you knew the man as well as I do, I am inclined to think that you would not wish to disgrace and punish him even if it were possible."

"Still, that is a matter for me to decide," the attorney insisted. "The examination will come on to-morrow. Then, of course, you will have to tell the truth. Meanwhile, you had better let me know what is coming. It will be easier for all of us."

"I am in a rather embarrassing position. Give me a few hours in which to think it over," said Riddles.

"Only give me your word that you will appear at the justice's office at ten in the morning. It would delay and embarrass us if you were to leave the state."

"I give you my word for that," said Riddles.

"Your word is sufficient. Some of us know you pretty well here. If the people of this town knew you as well as I do, they would be strewing roses in your path. And, by the way, our leading citizen—Mr. David Galt—is giving a dinner to-night at the Country Club to his new brother-in-law, Mr. J. Reginald Travers—a man, you know, who is highly esteemed here. I have the matter in charge, and I am sure that I shall be expressing his wishes when I ask you and your friends to that dinner."

"I think I can speak for my friends and tell you that we shall be glad to join your party," Riddles answered.

That morning Riddles and his superintendent, Mr. John Galt, left their friends at the inn and rode out to the Martin farm.

"I was never quite so excited in my life," said Galt.

"You may well be," Riddles answered. "You are going to meet the sweetest girl in America—bad luck to you!"

"I appreciate your kindness—old man," said Galt.

"I hate it," said Riddles. "I'll recommend you; but remember, if she turns you down it's me for the breach."

There was the house. As they turned in at the familiar gate, Riddles felt a thrill that brought the color to his face. His thoughts were as busy as swallows before a rain. He was not now and would never be again the drawling, whiskered, illiterate Uncle Sam, Jr. He was in purple and fine linen with the urbane manners of Riddles of Belleharbor. The big, silent, glowing limousine with its silver mountings—so unlike the mud stained "Maggie toters" in which he had traveled that road—was the modern symbol of opulence. Harriet and her mother were cutting roses near the front door. The car stopped near them. They looked a little frightened in their morning frocks. Harriet dropped her roses and began to feel her hair. It could not have been more becomingly disarranged. A little strand of it loosed by the breeze flickered on her red cheek, and she was trying to catch it.

"I'M GLAD to see you wearing that frock—I always liked it," said Riddles as he got out of the car. "I am the late Reuben Smith, suspected of many crimes and guilty only of deceiving you with a foolish masquerade."

Miss Harriet looked at him for half a moment while her cheeks grew redder. She stepped forward and gave him her hand with a merry smile, and with a pretty touch of dignity in her manner.

"My goodness!" she exclaimed. "What a change! But you never deceived *me*. I knew that you were a gentleman."

"And I owe you many apologies," said Mrs. Martin.

"Being in your debt, the apologies should come from me," Riddles answered. "I have brought a young man with me who wishes to meet your daughter." Turning to Miss Harriet he added: "You have heard me speak of him. May I introduce my friend, Mr. John Galt?"

"We shall be glad to meet him," said the young lady.

Mr. Galt stepped out of the car and was presented. Miss Harriet greeted him rather coolly. The party sat down on the veranda.

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"We have mutual friends," Galt said to the young lady. "The Gordons of New York. I expected to meet you in their house last winter, but was called away. I have seen you, now and then, at St. Bartholomew's. The last time I saw you was on the dock of the Cunard company. You were saying good-by to some friends."

"He never forgets a face worth remembering," said Riddles.

"Do we not all see faces in the crowd that passes us which we love to remember?" Galt asked.

"And, soon or late, we see the one face that has the great light in it," said Riddles. "Gee! I've slipped into poetry, but I can put a stop to that. I am going down to look at the pigs. They would put out the fire of a Tennyson. That's what's the matter with America—too many pigs! Too many antidotes for poetry!"

"IF YOU don't mind, and mother and Mr. Galt will excuse us, I'll go along with you," said Miss Harriet. "I think a look at the pigs would do me good."

They walked down a lane between two fields of rye.

"I like this place," said Riddles. "I like the distant hills and the meadow flats and the fine old house and its inhabitants. It's like the farm I was raised on."

"Some time I should like to see that farm," said the young lady.

"I'd like to show it to you. It's not so far from here."

"We're naturally interested in you, Smith—excuse me—I believe I am to call you Mr. Riddles hereafter—we have heard so many things about our hired man since he left."

"What have you heard?"

"Oh, all about your wealth and public-spirit and general greatness. The world is little, and the prosecuting attorney was on your trail. It's all very strange and wonderful."

"It's like seeing in the moonlight when every object takes on a look of grandeur. I warn you that I am a very small and foolish man. I have brought a real man with me. I have tried him out. He is wise and gentle and big-hearted. He fell in love with the look of you more than a year ago."

"Poor fellow! Somehow his look does not impress me," said Miss Harriet.

"Why?"

"I don't know. Perhaps, it's because he isn't big enough and then—he's too slow."

"How? You've only known him for a quarter of an hour. Give him a chance."

"Well, you know, I'm only a girl; but if I saw a young man that I liked and knew where to find him, it wouldn't take me a year to make his acquaintance. Not on your life."

"But he has had a lot to do in the last year."

"And bad judgment as to the main issue. He doesn't know what to neglect. He may be a good business man, but as a lover he is a joke. Thanks for your kindness, but I am disappointed. You have gone and brought the wrong man."

"What a riddle is a woman's heart! I want you to ask him to dinner and really get acquainted before you form an opinion."

"It will do no good. Don't worry about me. My plans are made."

"Perhaps you are already engaged?"

"Not quite. But my mind is not like my hair this morning. It is made up. I know what I am going to do."

"Your hair never looked better. As to your mind, I'm going to reserve my judgment," said Riddles.

"In behalf of my hair, I say thanks," she answered. "I am sure my mind never looked worse. It's a disorderly and neglected mind with a lot of rubbish on the floor. I'm glad you can not see it."

"I am going to be very brave and ask you to open the door of your mind and give me a look at its plans."

"And I am going to be very 'cagey,' as you men like to put it, and tell you to wait and see. Can you come to dinner this evening, and—you may bring your friend if you care to?"

"I am sorry, We are to dine with Mr. David Galt at the Country Club. He is paying a compliment to his new brother-in-law."

"Oh, then I will see you there. I had not quite decided to go. I think our time is up. They will be looking for us and we haven't seen the pigs. On the whole, I think we had better not look at the pigs."

"That's a noble thought! Let us remain unsullied. Being a modern farmer, your mother will think that we have been attacked by an infuriated pig."

Mrs. Martin and John Galt met them at the head of the lane.

"We have good servants now and could not think of letting you go until after luncheon," Mrs. Martin said to Riddles.

"Besides, you have treated us unfairly," Miss Harriet added. "You have taken us by surprise, and here we are in our working clothes and you so immaculate—in spats and silk and lovely soft tweed and polished leather—and I with a stunning new morning suit in the closet which I have never worn. You simply can not go away until you have seen it."

"I LONG to see it," said Riddles. "Besides I'm hungry. As to our unheralded arrival, what else would you expect from a rather sentimental hired man who was accustomed to seeing you in simple clothes, and who wanted to see you just as you used to look. I thought of telephoning, but I didn't know how."

"The hired man game doesn't go with me any longer," Miss Harriet said. "You're forgiven on condition that you two will take a walk until we are ready. Don't forget to show the pigs to Mr. Galt, and please don't hurry him."

When the young men returned from their walk the ladies met them at the door.

"Now we are trying to show a proper respect for our hired man," said Miss Harriet.

"It's a beautiful gown. You couldn't look lovelier."

"But my blood is drying up with sorrow," the young lady answered. "The butler has left. Struck for more money, and when I refused it, he cleared out bag and baggage."

"Good! Here's where I get back on my old job," said Riddles as he rose from the table. "Please let me. I shall love it."

So Riddles was permitted to bring the food from the pantry. He did it with a severe but kindly dignity; and would take no part in the talk until each course was served, and he had sat down at the table. He kept the party laughing with his playful humor, and finally "gave notice" that he would have to look for another place.

"You are like all the butlers," said Miss Harriet. "We pay you the price you ask and then you want more."

"I do not have privileges enough," said Riddles with a laugh.

"You may think better of that," the young lady answered. Monday we have what is called a 'Take-It-Back Day' in Coulterville. It will be a day for the righting of old wrongs—a day of 'owning up' and paying back and turning new leaves in the book of life. The Y. M. C. A. and the Christian Endeavor people have been working up a lot of surprises. The ceremonies are to be held in the park. You will have a chance to see your errors and confess them."

"That's too big a contract," said Riddles. "It would take me a week to get through."

Near the middle of the afternoon the young men started for Coulterville.

"She is all that I thought, but I can see that my case is hopeless," said Galt as they were riding along. "I am like poor Standish. I sent the wrong ambassador."

"Old man—honor bright!—I have tried to keep faith. I have done my best for you in spite of the fact that I am in love with the girl myself—a thing I couldn't help."

"My friend, I have not a word of complaint," Galt answered. "I would be the last man to blame you for falling in love with her, and, of course, you couldn't help showing it."

"Galt, I'm going to make another play for you. If it works, I'll retire from the scene and leave you here. I'm rather resigned to the fate of a bachelor."

"I forbid it. I haven't had time to get so hard hit as you are. You must go ahead. I am out of it."

"Don't be hasty. I have slender faith in my chances."

"Then I am sure you are blind," Galt answered. "I can see that she loves you.

"Galt, we're both fools about women," said Riddles. "I don't profess to be able to read 'em."

Chapter Six

The Affairs of Mr. J. Reginald Travers Come to a Sudden Dramatic Climax at a Public Reception and Dinner in His Honor Given by His Brother-in-Law, Political Boss of the County, to the Confusion of the Prosecuting Attorney.

"A RECEPTION to Mr. and Mrs. J. Reginald Travers will be given in the club parlors at 7:30; dinner at 8:15." That legend was a footnote on the cards of invitation. When Riddles and his friends arrived at the Country Club the reception had begun. Office and corridors were crowded with the best people of that ample and fashionable countryside. Diamonds, pearls and emeralds glowed in the brilliant light on shapely necks and bosoms. Slowly, the Belleharbor men made their way into the crowded parlors. When Mr. John Riddles was announced in a rather loud voice at the door, the stately dames raised their

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"Deah friend!" said Travers as he took the hand of the mill owner. "It is, shall I say, thrilling that we should meet here as we do."

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lorgnettes, and many eyes directed their gaze upon him and many lips began moving in whispers.

J. Reginald Travers was using his perfect English on a group of adoring ladies. Mrs. Travers, groomed and powdered to the limit—to quote the phrase of Riddles—looked her age, which was near sixty. They turned from their talk as soon as Riddles was announced.

"Deah friend!" said Travers as he took the hand of the mill owner. "It is, shall I say, thrilling that we should meet here as we do.

"And to think," said Mrs. Travers, "we didn't know we were entertaining an angel unawares."

"Madame, I don't want to be an angel," said Riddles. "For such promotion I am not quite prepared."

"You see our gratitude knows not where to set its limit," Travers interposed. "We love and admire you, deah Riddles, and may we not hope that you will accept the office of our friend and well-wisher?"

"That will be easier," said Riddles.

"And before you leave here may we have you for, at least, a dinner at Cedarfields?" Mrs. Travers asked. "I do so want to talk with you about certain of the mysteries of life. You know I was told by a fortune-teller that I would meet my husband unexpectedly, and that we should be married on the twenty-fourth of June. It all came to pass."

Riddles and his friends went on down the line. "I need a breath of fresh air," said he to the Mayor of Belleharbor with a laugh as they emerged on the club veranda and lighted cigarets. Riddles was thinking how the fortune-teller and the sentimental old lady had had their stage set for the entrance of the fortune-hunter. On the veranda the Belleharbor men witnessed the arrival of Percival Waters with Harriet and Mrs. Martin. Riddles, hearing himself addressed, turned and was face to face with the prosecuting attorney.

"I AM glad to see you," said the former. "Perhaps we had better have a little talk."

"It will be necessary, I think, for you to be made acquainted with one important fact before you begin your examination to-morrow," said Riddles.

"And what is the fact?"

"The man who killed Henry Taylor is here in this club-house."

"The radical—Reuben Smith?"

"The same."

"Will you point him out to me?"

"I will."

"Excuse me for a moment or two."

Before Riddles could stop him the attorney had hurried to the telephone, where for the next quarter of an hour he was trying to locate the chief of police and summon him to the Country Club.

Meanwhile Riddles had met Harriet and her mother on the veranda, and had invited the former to step aside with him for a little talk.

"I hope that you liked Mr. Galt on further acquaintance," said Riddles. "I want to tell you that he is one of the ablest and finest men I know."

"If he cares for me I am sorry," said Harriet. "I can not give him the least encouragement. You might as well know that I expect to marry Percival Waters."

"It is a large undertaking!"

"How so?"

"You will meet so many obstacles. I think you will have something to take back on Monday."

"Yes; an umbrella or two. We don't know whom they belong to."

"And you'll have to take back your intentions. I can not allow you to be turned into an island entirely surrounded by Waters. Unless you enjoy being lost, you are likely to be rescued. Perhaps, next time, I'll show up with the right man."

"I have no confidence in your judgment," she answered.

At that moment Percy arrived and was dumb with embarrassment, when Miss Harriet introduced Riddles as the late Reuben Smith.

TO HIS relief, Mrs. Martin came and announced that they were going in to dinner. As the ladies were entering the house with Percival Waters the prosecuting attorney came out.

"I have been in communication with the chief of police and he has just arrived," said the latter. "Is Smith still here?"

"Smith is still here, and I could have told you that you do not need an officer. He will make a clean breast of the matter."

Just then a young man came to the attorney and said that the whole party was waiting at the tables.

"I suppose he is one of the waiters?" the attorney whispered.

"He is one of the waiters," said Riddles. "I'll point him out to you in good time. Let the dinner proceed."

They entered the dining hall and found the people standing at the tables, and waiting for the prosecuting attorney, who was, it seemed, the toastmaster. Riddles found his seat on the dais at the left of that functionary; Mr. J. Reginald Travers being in the seat of honor between the toastmaster and Mr. David Galt. At the conclusion of the dinner the able attorney made an eloquent speech on the need of better relations between England and America, leading deftly up to the new tie which had been established in "the marriage of an urbane, accomplished and delightful English gentleman to a lady of our own county." He then had the honor of introducing Mr. J. Reginald Travers.

The response of Travers was notable for its wit, its gallantry, its modesty and its admirable good taste.

Every one applauded and spoke a tribute of praise. The ladies did not fail to express their wonder that a man so attractive had been willing "to throw himself away" on a "woman old enough to be his mother." Mr. David Galt spoke briefly of his wise but firm attitude toward labor, and of his sturdy opposition to the growing tendency to radicalism.

John Riddles was introduced as one of the great captains of industry, and a real American, who has been studying local conditions, and "one of whose little side-issues is The Rescue Mercantile Company of our town—an institution which has put every inhabitant of this county—except the profiteers—in his debt."

The applause lasted a full minute as Riddles arose. He said that this honor and applause had been unsought and unexpected; that he hoped he would not seem to be lacking in grace and gratitude when he declared that it was also not quite welcome since it had put his motives under suspicion. He was glad to say that he thought Mr. Travers in every way worthy of the confidence and esteem of his neighbors.

While a quartet was singing, the attorney came to Riddles and asked:

"Will you come with me for a moment?"

Riddles accompanied the toastmaster to a point near the doors.

"Is it not time for us to act?" he inquired. "The waiters are getting impatient. They have been detained in the service hall."

"Let them go," said Riddles. "The man you are to arrest is *here*—at the guest table."

"What!" exclaimed the prosecuting officer as his face grew damp with perspiration. "I thought you said he was one of the waiters."

"I meant that he was a member of the dinner-party who was waiting for you. It was an evasion, but I wanted the dinner to come off just as it has without a cloud in your sky. I could have made it hard for you."

"In God's name, who is Smith?"

"I think he is none other than 'the urbane, accomplished and delightful English gentleman, Mr. J. Reginald Travers.'"

The attorney dropped his cigaret, gasped and staggered a little so that Riddles caught his elbow to steady him.

"In Heaven's name! What am I to do?" the lawyer muttered in a thick, tremulous whisper. "He is a brother-in-law of the boss, and a cousin by marriage of the county judge and the sheriff. What am I to do?"

"Nothing—just nothing, but look wise and cheerful."

"That is what I will do."

"After all he may be innocent," said Riddles. "He acts and talks like the real thing. A counterfeit man would be sure to slip a cog now and then. He doesn't. So far as I know he rings true. He's got me guessing. When I get a chance I'm going to ask him to tell me the truth."

Chapter Seven

Which Presents the Developments of the Curious Festival of "Take-it-Back Day," in Which Miss Harriet takes Back a Certain Resolution and John Riddles and J. Reginald Travers Each Opens the Door of His Spirit.

"TAKE-It-Back Day" had arrived. Posters had announced that, at the conclusion of the program, the Martin farm would be sold at auction. Riddles, whose friends had returned to Belleharbor, remained in Coulterville for that unique festival. He spent Sunday playing golf and in a long ride with David Galt, which had ended in a dinner-party at which the Martins were present.

"To-morrow I expect to see you turn over a new leaf, and try to reform," he had said to Miss Harriet at the table. "You have much to take back."

"Too much for one to carry," she announced.

"I'll give you a hand if you will let me," he suggested. "I shall drive out for you and your mother—if I may—right after luncheon."

The people from the village, and many from the country houses on the hills around it, assembled in the park that day. It was a curious affair. The fountain pool

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had been emptied and turned into a great booth filled with garden tools and household articles. People were "taking it back" and shaking hands in token of good will. Women who had said spiteful things of their neighbors were apologizing and being kissed. The names of sundry people were called from the big booth. On their coming forward envelopes containing divers sums of money were given them from unknown sources. This was said to be conscience money coming back after many years with interest added.

The most notable feature of this part of the program was an annuity of one thousand a year for life to Mrs. Henry Taylor of Connors, who was present to receive it. The Reverend Mr. Wells announced that the gift was from Mr. and Mrs. J. Reginald Travers. Goods of any value which were unclaimed were to be sold at auction for the benefit of the Y. M. C. A.

A local clergyman made a prayer and a speech and two children spoke pieces. Then Erastus Waters—the notorious profiteer—announced his intention of building a hospital for the village by way of giving back part of his earnings. Old Ab Risley—the village drunkard—enlivened the proceedings with a new note. He declared that he had once said that Rat Waters was a rascal. He had been drunk when he said it, and did not realize the injustice he was doing. He wished now to take it back and give him his full due. He was a damn rascal. How nice of him to build a hospital for those who were sick of his robberies! As to himself he would prefer a check.

"Me an' Rat Waters have done a lot for this town," he added. "Now he has give it a hospital an' I have give it an opinion."

When Risley had sat down, who should rise and go to the platform but Mary—the gray-haired woman in black whom Riddles had seen so often in the park those summer days. She was calm and self-possessed, and spoke with a pleasant smile in saying:

"Many kind words have been said to me. Many things have been taken back. For these I am grateful. The money which has come to me here—from whom I can only guess—will help to purge my heart of its bitterness. But no one can give back my youth or the good name it bore which was unjustly taken from me. Those who did it I have forgiven and now I seek only peace and the love of my neighbors."

THE auctioneer was a man of wit and imagination. He kept the crowd laughing with fanciful bits of history relating to the objects on sale.

When at last the Martin farm was offered, Riddles thought it was done in terms not calculated to stimulate the desire to possess it. It was run down, the auctioneer declared, the buildings needed repair and the land some fertilizing, but it was a good farm with an exceptional view of the hills and river valley. What was he offered.

Erastus Waters started the bidding.

"Twenty thousand dollars," the auctioneer repeated. "Who will say twenty-five?"

Riddles rose and said, "I will bid forty thousand."

"Forty-five," Waters shouted with a scarlet face.

"Sixty thousand," said Riddles, and the sympathetic crowd began to applaud him.

Half a moment of silence followed while the finger of the auctioneer pointed at Mr. Waters.

"Sixty-five!" the latter shouted.

"Seventy-five," Riddles rejoined.

Waters turned toward his adversary. The notion had come to him rather suddenly that he was really bidding for the hand of Harriet Martin for his son. Riddles' view of the situation was not quite so serious. He was really bidding to save the ladies from a sense of obligation to Waters, and to insure them a comfortable surplus above their debts.

"Does the gentleman understand that this is a cash transaction?" Waters demanded.

"Perfectly," Riddles answered.

"Then I bid eighty thousand."

"One hundred thousand," was the bid of Riddles.

WATERS threw up his hands, shook his head and sat down.

"Backed off the dump!" Ab Risley shouted amid laughter and applause and John Riddles was declared to be the owner of the Martin farm.

The prosecuting attorney came to him with congratulations.

While they were talking they were interrupted by Erastus Waters.

"I have new evidence in the matter of the Connors murder," he declared. "It involves this man and another. I am going to demand a hearing before the grand jury."

"I should advise you to take that back," said Riddles. "I came here with peaceful intentions, but I have evidence which would put your son in prison. The thing for you is peace; but if you want war I am prepared."

"Mr. Waters, I know all about this man," said the prosecuting attorney. "He is right when he says that he could make you trouble. You had better not begin knocking anybody. As to the Connors case, I shall be glad to talk with you in my office, but I do not think that you have made any discovery which will be new to me."

"Well, what's the use of fighting anyhow!" Waters exclaimed as he offered his hand.

"If we can not be friends we need not be enemies," said Riddles.

The latter finished his business with the auctioneer. As he was leaving the park with the ladies, he turned to Harriet Martin and said:

"Now you are free to do as you like. There is no string on you. The sale gives you enough above your debts to confer a degree of independence. I hate to have you marry Percy, but if you really want to I shall give you some facts and then, if you persist, my blessing."

"To tell you the whole truth, I don't want to," she answered.

"Then perhaps you would consider me?"

"No," she answered. "I would not consider you a minute."

"Why not?"

"I would say yes very quickly."

"Thanks! I shall go home with you and there we shall attend to all the details."

"I had it in mind yesterday to make a historic suggestion," said she.

"What is that?"

"Speak for yourself, John," she answered with a laugh.

While Harriet and her mother were shopping, Riddles met Mr. J. Reginald Travers.

"Travers," said the mill owner, "I would like to know something of your past."

"Often I think that I know very little about it myself," said Travers. "I do not mind telling you in confidence that I used to be an actor—a very good actor in England. I went to the war and got rather careless with human life. I came out of it seeing red and drinking red. Came over here and went broke, and joined a labor union in the trade I had known as a boy. Now I am back on the stage again playing second lead in a really great part. I love it, but the performance is endless and there isn't a brick or a red flag in the play so far. I'm rather glad. Curious how your sympathies change with your circumstances."

Riddles looked into his eyes and understood.

"I hope you are happy," he remarked.

"Let me tell you a little story," Travers proposed. "It is quite thrilling. I lived for a time in a dugout over in France. There were thirty-two steps in the stairway that led down to it. On either side of the stairway were pockets in which bombs were kept. When an attack came we grabbed some bombs on our way up and at the top step were ready to meet the enemy. Each bomb had a pin on one side that discharged it. You gave the pin a shove and then you had to get rid of that little thunderbolt and quickly. Four seconds later it went off and tore itself and everything near it into bits. One day a fellow near the top of the stairs carelessly dropped a bomb. I, down in the dugout, saw it come hopping from step to step toward me. Would it strike the pin or not? That was the question. It didn't. It rolled to my feet and stopped."

"ONE couldn't stand that every day," said Riddles.

"Unless one has to," Travers laughed. "It's a highly emotional part so far, but I have got along with it very well. Rather in my line, you know. Good-by, the madam is waiting. Thanks for all you have done."

Before leaving town Riddles went to say good-by to the prosecuting attorney. "My friend," said the latter, "you were wrong. Travers did not kill Taylor. I have here the written confession of the man who did it. He was a friend of Travers who had fought at his side in France. He saved Travers's life one night. Brought him into camp badly wounded under fire. Our friend took the Connors crime on himself as an act of gratitude. The confession is supported by the affidavit of an eye-witness."

"What are you going to do about it?" Riddles asked.

"The guilty man will be punished but not severely. I learn that while the brick may have hastened the death of Taylor it was not the direct cause of it. He had an incurable disease from which he had long suffered."

"Well it occurs to me that there are few who can play the part of a gentleman more successfully than J. Reginald Travers," said Riddles.

THE END

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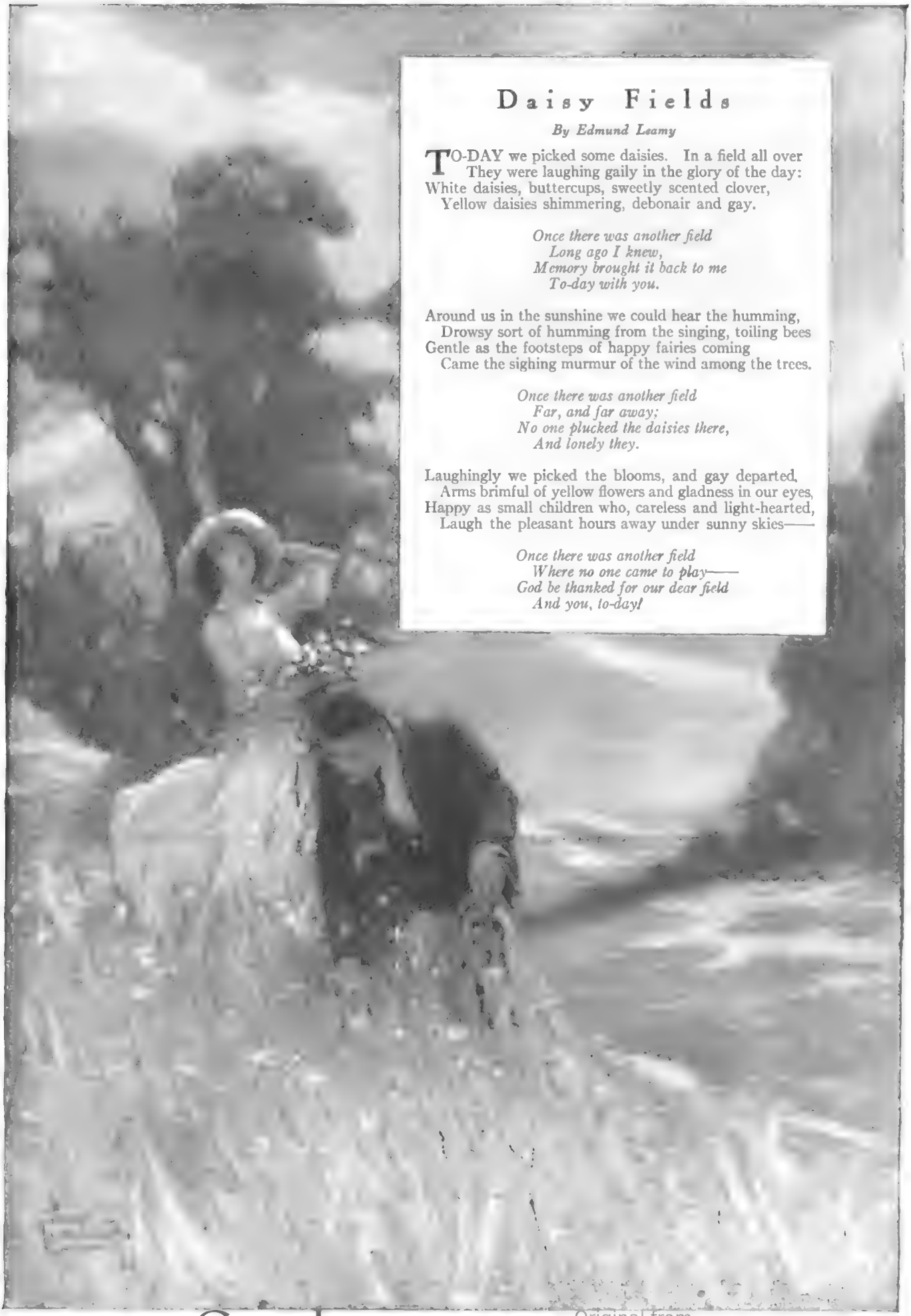
Daisy Fields

By Edmund Leamy

TO-DAY we picked some daisies. In a field all over
They were laughing gaily in the glory of the day:
White daisies, buttercups, sweetly scented clover,
Yellow daisies shimmering, debonair and gay.

Once there was another field
Long ago I knew,
Memory brought it back to me
To-day with you.

Around us in the sunshine we could hear the humming,
Drowsy sort of humming from the singing, toiling bees
Gentle as the footsteps of happy fairies coming
Came the sighing murmur of the wind among the trees.

Once there was another field
Far, and far away;
No one plucked the daisies there,
And lonely they.

Laughingly we picked the blooms, and gay departed,
Arms brimful of yellow flowers and gladness in our eyes,
Happy as small children who, careless and light-hearted,
Laugh the pleasant hours away under sunny skies——

Once there was another field
Where no one came to play——
God be thanked for our dear field
And you, to-day!

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The Fool

II—Tale of the King's Heir

By H. C. Bailey

THIS medieval romance, second in a series by Mr. Bailey, again features Bran, versatile jester, juggler and minstrel. The odd, great-hearted fool, sport of coarse feudal barons and servant of swashbuckling bullies, on occasion matches his wits against the keenest and in victory proves generous as the noblest.

"IT IS ugly here," said the girl. "I hope it ends soon."

"Verily and amen," said the man. "An ugly world, though you are in it, Edith. Pray God it ends soon."

"You always take me wrong," said the girl. "You will always be solemn."

"For I am a fool," said the man.

The year of the Lord 1153 was drawing toward Michaelmas. They were riding through what was even eight centuries ago cornland, but the fields were neither ripe to harvest nor bare stubble. The corn had been burned and all that countryside lay black and stinking.

"Then came the devil by night and sowed tares," the man said. "Oh, Mother Mary, Mother Mary, there will be hungry children in this shire before the corn is ripe again."

They made a bright patch of color in the black land, he and the girl, for he wore a cloak of saffron yellow with a red hood fashioned like a cock's comb, and her mantle was green. He was on a pony and she astride a mule, and as they rode they jangled, for besides the bells on his hood their steeds were hung with much merry baggage, a little drum, a tambourine and two brass horns. Bran, jester, juggler and minstrel, was on his way to the harvest fair of St. Edmundsbury where the girl would make music while he juggled and danced. A pair well matched to make folk gay: he was a little man and grotesque, bowed down by his big head, all arms and legs and hands and feet, and she was shapely, buxom for her youth, and of a soft smiling prettiness.

They came after a while to a town, a place of a hundred houses built of wattle and plaster and some two or three of stone, a town of dignity, and there they made a halt. Seeking out the hovel which, by a pole thrust out above the door to bear a bunch of branches, announced itself a tavern, they tied up pony and mule under a penthouse, and went in to dine upon eels stewed with saffron and mustard and bread and wine, which cost them the great price of four silver pennies, so that Bran questioned the reckoning, and was told there was a cruel dearth of all food of man and beast.

"YEA, yea," Bran nodded. "When the poor grudge the poor, hell is upon earth. Take up the moneys, good fellow."

So the man of the tavern, knowing himself an extortioner, blessed him and warmed to him and asked where he was going. But when Bran spoke of the fair at St. Edmundsbury the taverner threw up his hands.

"St. Edmund's fair! God have mercy, minstrel! Whence have you come that you know no better?"

"Out of the land where fools are born, brother. Tell me, then, what ails St. Edmund?"

Then the man told him that Count Eustace, the king's son, claiming money and men of the abbot of Edmundsbury, had ravaged all the lands of the abbey near and far and the land of every man who was reckoned loyal to the monks, so that the country was a desert without corn or beast, and there would be no fair at Edmundsbury, but mourning and ruined folk asking alms of the empty abbey.

"Yea, yea," Bran nodded. "When wise men go crying, a fool must turn wise. When children go crying, our life is but lies."

"I was to have a new coif at Edmundsbury," the girl said, "a new coif of silk. A thing always goes wrong with us."

"Na, na, na. All is well for us always, for God lets us laugh at ourselves," and he coaxed her and was droll till she put off pouting and he promised they would go back to London again and she was merry.

But when they went out into the marketplace there were so many people there and they so wretched that Bran swore it was

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but God's charity to give them a dance and a jest.

"They have not a penny among them," said Edith.

"Then God ha' mercy, child, let them forget it a while. Play, play," and he beat a roll on the drum and struck up a merry ballad while she played on a lute, and then he plucked out his bagpipe and making it drone and squeak danced grotesquely. Soon they had a ring about them and the girl slipped off her green cloak and stood out in a golden dress that clung about her and danced while he played upon the horn. Then Bran juggled with knives and the poor folk forgot themselves and began to shout and stamp, and when the girl stood out to sing them a love-song they loved her, and said so and she was the prettier.

So Bran made fun for them like the men of his trade yesterday and to-day and forever, coming out into the ring with an absurd gait and telling an absurd tale of nothing and breaking it off to turn to one and another, telling their fortunes and promising them the wildest nonsense. But in the midst of it, snatching a moment in the midst of laughter, "Who is the great lord, brother?" says he in a whisper to a grave fellow.

From the best house, the only stone house in the market-place, had come out some men richly dressed. They watched and one was drawing nearer. He walked unsteadily, a big man and young and of some beauty of face, but it was sunken already and flushed and he frowned and made mouths.

"Count Eustace it is, the king's son," the man muttered to Bran, and as he came the crowd fell apart from him and was hushed. "Ay, stand off, swine, you stink," he said.

But Bran rattled on in a swift patter of nonsense. "What is this folly, fool? Do you tell fortunes? Tell mine, you rogue."

Bran came up to him in zigzags like a dog conscious of sin, grinning and squirming and bowing. Then on a sudden he stopped and shot out his long arm with his long finger pointing straight and shrieked and trembled all over.

"Jesu mercy!" he gasped and cried shrilly. "What stands behind you, lord? Look, look! Oh, the black monk behind you and his eyes in his hood"; and he put up his hands, making the sign of the evil eye and staggered back and back into the crowd.

Count Eustace started, looked round on this side and on that, turned about and turned again wildly and clutched at the air. He tried to speak and said no word. His face was wrought with terror. He swayed and he fell.

THE people shrank from him, murmuring holy words, crossing themselves, and he was left lying alone. None too quickly his knights came to him and stood a little while fearing to touch him. Then the gaping lips closed and quivered and gave out a hoarse oath, and he raised himself and again looked over his shoulder and shuddered. Talking to each other with their eyes, his knights drew near and bore him away.

Before that Bran and the girl were gone, making the best speed their beasts could give them. And when they were well away Bran laughed. "Yea, yea. Ever he stands my friend, good brother Fear. He is the great lord, big brother Fear."

But the girl looked at him askance. "Bran," she said timdily, "Bran, what did you see?"

"See, child?" he laughed again. "Nought but a lewd, drunken boy. He saw the rest. But he is a great lord. He can see things. Not Bran, no. Bran is but a poor fool."

"Sometimes I think you have the evil eye yourself," she said.

It was late in that day they met the man from the North. He wore a good cloak, but it was plain. He rode a good horse, but it was a beast for use, not show. He might have been a merchant or some lord's steward. He was halted on a hill in the burned country, gazing at it, and when they came up: "How call you this, good fellow?" he said. "Whose work is it?"

So Bran told him.

"A king's son!" said he and swore. "A man would say it was the king's work to make the corn grow, not to blast it."

"A MAN would say so, cousin, if no king could hear him," Bran grinned.

"I have ridden three hundred miles in England and, by the rood, each mile is worse. Pray you, good fellow, what manner of king is this you have in your country?"

"By my faith, cousin, a very kingly king."

"Say you so? God's mercy, you are easy to please in England."

"Sing soft, cousin."

"I come from France where the corn is reaped and the kine grow fat, and here—" he waved his hand to the black fields—"but they have a king in France."

"But one, cousin. But here there is Stephen who is king and Eustace, his son, who hopes to be king, and one Henry of Anjou, his cousin, who would be king, and the land hath no peace."

"I have heard of it," says the Frenchman. "But which of them do you choose in England?"

"I am but a poor fool, cousin."

"God's mercy, it is time one of them made order. This is very hell." It was said vehemently and thereafter he fell silent, glowering at the black land. And Bran looked at him. He was a very solid fellow, as tall as a man need be, but so thick everywhere that he seemed short, bull-necked, deep of chest and of belly, and massive in the leg. His face was handsome in a bold, fierce kind, but red all over, and his eyes were bloodshot and the redder it looked for the other red in his hair. No doubt of his vigor, none of his passions. And yet—suddenly he turned upon Bran.

"What are you thinking of me, sirrah?"

"Why, cousin, I am wondering whether you are a boy or a man."

"Well said, fool." He laughed as loud as he talked. "That is the very heart of it. I like you for that." Then it was as if a veil were drawn over his staring gray eyes. "Well, know me then. I am a Frenchman born and come to England to look at certain lands and traffic for them if I think well. And you? Who is your lord?"

"Nenny, nenny. Bran is a masterless man, cousin. Bran goes to and fro in the earth and walks up and down in it, all men's servant, no man's slave. Like a king, cousin."

The Frenchman laughed again and thrust out a big clumsy hand and gripped his arm. "I love you, I say."

"That is what no man has ever said." Bran looked at him wistfully.

"But a pretty wench on a time, rogue?" The Frenchman jerked his head at Edith.

"Fie, then!" says she and laughed and looked away.

"Na, na. Edith is Bran's sister and Bran's daughter. Edith is my good maid who dances when I play."

"God's body! it is what women are for," says the Frenchman. "And you, what is your part?"

"He talks his follies, sir," said Edith, with a beckoning glance, and then smiling malice at Bran: "Yes and he tells fortunes."

"Oh, a sage fool! By the stars, brother fool? By art magic? By——"

"Nay, brother, by the eyes," says Bran and looked into his.

"God's body! tell my fortune then. I do not fear." He stopped his horse.

"Have your will," Bran said. "Come down to earth and eat bread with me. We are all one life then," and he slid off his pony and opening his scrip set bread and meat and salt upon the grass. The Frenchman laughed at him but sat down and held out his hand.

"Eat, brother," says Bran, grave as a priest.

"Nay, faith, he is quite mad, sir," says the girl. "He will see death in your face as like as not."

"I defy him." The Frenchman began to munch, and Bran ate too and brought out a flask of wine and drank with him and looked. And after a long time:

"Now have I eaten your salt, fool. And I am your man. What now?"

"Yea, yea," Bran said. "You do not fear. That is strange. The first man ever I saw. You do not fear. You are sure, so sure, brother."

"WHY man, I had a devil to my granddad's granddad. So the tale goes in my country."

"Yea, yea. The old tales are true tales. I see the devil, brother. He is your lord whiles. But you are greater. Only you have ever two souls in you. You love and you are cold. You are cruel and are gentle, rash and very wise, a wild rogue and good. I see a great fortune, brother, and sorrowful, sorrowful." He put out his hand and touched the man timidly and still gazed at him.

"God's blood! it is a fortune I like," the man cried. "What, brother, is that the devil speaks?"

"Nay, that is no devil. That is more like a fairy man," Bran smiled.

"Do you say so? My granddam's mother was a fairy and all in a night she was gone into the air. So they tell of us in— By the rood, man, you are a seer."

"Na, na. Bran is but a poor fool, brother."

Whatever persuaded him, whether he was taken by Bran or the girl's buxom prettiness or by the shrewd calculation that if he traveled with a minstrel and his wench, he was not likely to be taken for a person of importance, and I suppose all these three reasons worked in him, he joined himself to their company. He too was going to London; he would be some days in London if all went well. They lodged in a tavern at Westminster. Why, he would like to see something of the court and this king of theirs.

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"It is a boy that you are, brother," said Bran.

"He is a very comely man, King Stephen," said Edith.

"As comely as I, fair lady?"

She laughed. "I dare not look at you, you are so quick."

They found each other mighty pleasant, these two, and made a merry journey of it. And indeed the Frenchman was good company, a spirited fellow, taking his world with gusto, of ready mirth, full of talk, and the girl liked him none the worse for his restlessness and his sudden vehemence. But Bran was silent and distraught. In this fashion they came to their tavern.

When the Frenchman came down in the morning, and that was betimes, he heard that Bran was gone out already, and afterward as he sat at breakfast came Edith and pouted and said that this was ever the fool's way to go off and mope and maunder by himself and it was hard to bear and she was the loneliest maid. Whereat the Frenchman made merry, and mended the breakfast of bacon and small beer with a capon and mulberry wine, though he gave himself little. But she clapped her hands and was so naïvely delighted that he kissed her. She was indeed as fresh as a flower. And the end of it was that Bran came back to find her sitting on his knee with her arm about his neck and his lips at hers.

Bran stood at the door and beckoned. "Brother, I have news for you," he said, and beckoned again and went out. The girl had sprung up and away. She stood an ignoble spectacle, preening herself and defiant. The Frenchman laughed and kissed his hand to her and followed the fool.

He clapped him on the shoulder. "Speak out, man." But the fool shook him off and walked on swiftly beyond the houses and out to the river bank. There he flung himself on the shingle and began to throw stones into the falling tide. The Frenchman stood over him smiling good-humored contempt. "And now your news," said he.

"The poor fool," Bran said, "he had nothing save one poor little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished up. It did eat of his own meat and drank of his own cup and was unto him as a daughter."

"So." The Frenchman shrugged. "You need not talk scripture."

"Will you say holy writ is not well writ, brother?"

"God's body, man, do not whine like a priest. I did the wench no harm. And what is it to you? She is not your wife nor love. You told me so."

"YEA, yea. What should Bran do with love of woman?" He made himself like a hunchback, he grimaced. "Bran is a fool born. But the poor fool holds that maid dear. He would not have her broken, brother. She is all that he has."

"Why, man, do you think you can keep her a nun?"

Bran looked up at him. "And you, brother, do you think you could take her to wife?"

"God have mercy, fool, you are too righteous. Man and maid must have their fun."

"There is other work for you, brother. You were not born to spoil poor men's maids."

The Frenchman glowered at him. "The devil burn you and your homilies."

"Yea, yea." Bran threw another stone into the water. "And kings are but men and men are but kings. So God save all."

The Frenchman laughed. "Now God have mercy, fool, what is this?"

"Why this is thus, brother. You are but King Stephen without a crown."

"God's body, man, give me no more riddles."

"Na, na. Bran is a simple man. No riddles in him. See, brother, because I will not let you do your will, you send me to the devil. Because the bishops will not let him do his will King Stephen holds them all prisoners. Ergo, brother, ergo, you are as like as brothers, you and my lord king."

"Is it true, good fellow?"

"That you are his brother? Nay, ask your mother. The tale is true as the sky is blue, but oh my brother, what is it to you?"

THE Frenchman laughed, but his staring gray eyes were grave. "By my faith, a king is a strange king that throws down the glove to Holy Church! Bishops prisoned! I will not believe it."

"Nay, then, come and hear. It is in every man's mouth."

"What ails him with his bishops?"

"Why, brother, he would have had his son, Lord Eustace, crowned to be king after him."

"Would he so?" the Frenchman muttered and bit his lip.

"But the bishops answered him nay and they lie in duress till they do his will."

"He breaks them or they break him," said the Frenchman. "So. A man is a bold man who drives Holy Church to that."

They went toward the palace then, to hear if it were true and hear more of it. The twisted byways were full of people, chattering the story, and the thing was what Bran had told, and by all men's judgment a great grim deed. The Frenchman moved among them eager and adroit in his talk and each moment more jovial. And in the end, coming near the palace, which a crowd watched as a place where something awful was in doing, unseen they saw King Stephen ride in, a big man and stately, but already old. He rode alone, he looked right on, he seemed to see nothing, he was pathetically earnest.

"Oh, he is handsome as a saint," a woman said.

The Frenchman laughed. "And he would be king!" he said in Bran's ear.

"Yea, yea. But I do not laugh, brother, I. God give you the right when you be gray."

Now when they came back to the tavern it was still early, and they went into the garden to drink piment, and drinking heard a murmur of voices and laughter. The Frenchman looked at Bran and shrugged, and taking him by the arm walked him along by the yew hedge. In the field beyond the girl Edith sat, as she had sat on the Frenchman's knee, with another man. He was a short plump creature, low-browed and of a base, sensual face.

Bran drew back and with a loud laugh the Frenchman followed him. "God's body! We are not honored, friend, neither you nor I."

But Bran sat himself down on the grass and began to throw daisies in the air.

There was rustling and a scurry behind the hedge and in a moment they saw the gleam of the girl's yellow dress as she ran to the house. The man came swaggering through the orchard; he wore the king's colors, he was plainly one of the Flemish mercenaries whom the king kept for a guard. "Give you good day, fool," he said and laughed. But his little eyes were on the Frenchman. "Why, who is your fine friend?"

"Friend, brother? Na, na, Bran has no friends." He tossed daisies into the man's face and ran away.

The Frenchman and the Fleming were left staring at each other. Then the Frenchman laughed in his face and went in. And the Fleming stood watching him.

They made a grim dinner of it. The Frenchman chose to make game of Edith and she was sullen and Bran muttered to himself and cut queer figures out of apples, and set them in array, and sometimes he looked at the girl with a queer smile, and sometimes wistfully at the man. But he had no word for either.

There came the tramp of men marching in order. The girl started and looked at the Frenchman with the gleam of a smile, mocking, malicious. Bran turned to the window. "Get you gone, brother," he said over his shoulder. "Out by the kitchen, out and away."

"Why, what now?" the Frenchman started up.

"My lord, you know," Bran turned on him.

"So." The Frenchman laid a hand on his shoulder. "Go you, good fellow. No man bears my burdens for me. God's body, go!"

"Na, na," Bran said. "You——"

The girl laughed. Already the Flemish men-at-arms were in the room, and first of them the plump fellow of the orchard.

"Away, my lord, away," Bran muttered and thrust in front of him and with grotesque antics, contorting himself, affecting spasms of surprise, pretending to see difficulty and from afar approached the Fleming. "But nay, but yea, it is Paul of Tournai, my little brother Paul," he cried, and fell upon the man and hugged him and kissed him and clung to him.

HIS brother Paul, cursing, threw him off at last. "You are too much a fool or too little. Lie down, dog, or you will taste rope." But the Frenchman had not used the chance to escape. He stood his ground and the Fleming turned to him and looked him over and grinned. "Who are you, friend?" he said.

"Away to kennel," the Frenchman said.

"Now look you, there is pride for a fellow that lurks in a low tavern. I think you must be better lodged, friend. Come to the palace."

"God's body! rogue, do you give orders to me?" the Frenchman thundered.

The Fleming hesitated and licked his lips. "*De par le roi*—in the name of the king," he said.

"God save your king," the Frenchman shrugged. "Let him come and seek me."

The Fleming grinned again. "You betray yourself, my lord. Come, we are many and you are one."

"Do you match yourselves with me, rogue?"

"By the mass, if I did not know you, you have told me your name now," the Fleming laughed. "Come, my lord, it is an order." He drew near, yet faltered, and then making bold, "Henry of Anjou," he cried,

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Count Eustace started and clutched at the air. He tried to speak and said no word. His face was wrought with terror.

and laid his hand on the Frenchman's shoulder, "in the king's name I——"

"Dog!" the Frenchman shouted at the touch and flung him so violently that he fell full length and lay.

"It is done, it is done," Bran darted forward, plucking out his knife. "Go, my lord, go," and he put himself before the men-at-arms.

"Nay, good lad, peace!" The Frenchman set him aside. "Do you call yourselves the king's men? March on before, and tell King Stephen that Henry of Anjou comes to his palace."

Paul of Tournai staggered to his feet. "Hold him, guard him! Take the fool there too. He has drawn steel on the king's guard."

Henry turned. "So. How are you called, dog? Paul of Tournai? I do not forget." Marching in the midst of them he came to the palace and with hands bound behind him, beaten and kicked, there followed Bran, a sight which hardly a moment drew the eyes of the crowd. The like was often seen and these were plainly men of no account in the world.

As soon as he was in the palace courtyard Henry stopped short, and out of the confusion which he made, for the guard having no order marched on, he called out in a loud voice, "Let King Stephen be told that Henry of Anjou is come to have speech with him."

THEN every man who was about the courtyard, servants and men-at-arms and clerks and knights, turned to stare. Paul of Tournai ran up to him. "I have my orders, my lord, and you are my prisoner. March on, march on." And the guard closed, pressing on him, and he was borne away.

A bare room built in the wall and half below the ground, lit by a loophole above his head, received him, and the door-bolts clanged and he was left alone. He leaned in the corner—there was nothing in the place but the stone which made it—and folded his arms and broke out in that sudden loud laugh of his.

"Now has the hart caught a hound," said he. "Here is sport," and he fell silent and very still and calm for a while and let his mind work. But then on a sudden he roared out.

"The foul fiend tear that wench," and a flow of vile words and blasphemy, forgetting her in a moment, but raving against his plight and his fortune and all the world, and he struck with his bare hands at the wall like a madman and flung himself down and writhed and rolled and gnawed his clothes.

So he lay when he was aware of more light and a voice saying: "By the holy rood, this is the blood of Anjou!"

The door shut, the light was dim again. He started to his feet and stood before a man with a drawn sword. "Who are you, fellow?" His voice was cold enough.

"Yves d'Eu, boy."

"Stephen has no better man than you are?"

"As you say, my lord," the knight laughed.

"And a timid fellow, too." Henry pointed to the drawn sword.

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"Faith, who deals with a madman guards against a bite."

"Do you think you can kill me in the dark?" He sprang upon Sir Yves and bore him down, wrenching his sword arm, and from the struggle rose grasping the sword.

"God save you, boy, who thought of killing you?" Sir Yves gasped, scrambling to his feet. "You are mad as a hare."

"Go back to your King Stephen and tell him that Henry of Anjou waits him sword in hand."

"What? What? By the mass, it is a challenge!"

"And you a knight, Sir Yves d'Eu. Carry it or be shamed."

"None so made neither," Sir Yves muttered. "Pray you, my lord, stand in that light there. Ay, it is so. You are Henry of Anjou." Henry raised the sword in salute and Sir Yves lifted his hand. "My lord, you well know that King Stephen is the most gallant knight alive. A challenge hath he never denied nor will ever from any man who hath the right to give him challenge."

"Henry of Anjou may touch the shield of any man that lives."

"I do not gainsay it, my lord. But king Stephen is old and you are young."

"If you be a knight, Sir Yves d'Eu, say to your king what I have said."

In a while came back Sir Yves and another knight and said, "We bring you to the king, my lord."

"It is well. Carry my sword till I ask it of you again."

Sir Yves bowed and took it and they went before him across the courtyard. "This is he we called a boy," said Sir Yves to his fellow, "but he hath a devil in him."

"Ay, brother. It is the patron saint of his house."

King Stephen sat in his hall in a great chair on the dais and about him stood a little company, but he sat as if he were alone; he looked right on at nothing. Henry marched in, the stone ringing to his stride, and stood square, young and full of life and very ruddy before the sallow, white-bearded king. The dull eyes became aware of him, but without a gleam in their heaviness.

"Ay, ay. You are Henry of Anjou."

"And you Stephen of Blois."

"I am king of England, young man,"

"Anointed and crowned." Henry lifted his hand in salute and smiled.

"Give him a stool," the king said. "You are a bold boy, sirrah."

"I SENT you a challenge, Stephen. God have mercy, do you call that bold?" he laughed. "But what now? Shall we talk in a crowd, cousin? Do you want guards?"

"Give us room," the king cried and his knights drew down the hall.

"I sent you a challenge; ay, and I will make it good where you will and as you will."

"I am king in England and you are a landless boy."

"Yesterday is yours, to-morrow is mine. But I sent you a challenge because I sought speech with you. I come to your city alone and you send a base-born fellow to lay hands on me. I have no word of lord or knight till one comes to me in my dungeon with his sword out. Grammercy! At least it was a knight who was to murder me. A better knight than you, Stephen. For he was ashamed."

"By the cross, there was no thought to murder you. You were not known. You came by stealth, you lurked in hiding. The Fleming brought word of you and was bidden bring what he found. But nought was sure. And the sword—it was said you were mad, boy. You raved."

"Who raves here, cousin? I was not known? Why was I made prisoner? Speak truth, man; you knew and you feared. It is writ in your face."

"I fear no man," the king said. "There is none can do me hurt. What do you want of me?"

"God's body! what do you want of me? I come to England alone, a naked man, and you set your men-at-arms on me and drag me to your castle."

"Why did you come to England?"

"You hold what is mine."

"I am the king by right and by might. You come to harry the realm like your mother before you. You have no claim to mercy."

"ASK mercy for yourself, Stephen. You took the realm which was my mother's by a trick. By arms you have held it. I could forgive you that——"

"Holy saints, are you to be my judge?"

"Yes, by God's blood, I am your judge, I and every man who hath a right in England. You are the king. And all the land is waste and no man is sure of life and living. Ay, your own son burns the fields black——"

"Be silent!" The king started up.

"I fight my challenge, Stephen." Henry came nearer and spoke into his face. "King by right and might! You are no king. A king is he who rules men that they thrive. You are the bane of the land. And now you throw God's bishops into prison till they will anoint your son to be its bane after you and curse the land when you are gone to your doom." He stopped, for the king turned away with his hand to his brow. "What, do you yield yourself, Stephen?"

"My son is dead, boy," the king said.

Henry stood silent. "That I did not know," he said after a while and bent his head and crossed himself. "God receive his soul. I have fought a stricken man, cousin."

"You say well," the king muttered.

"How did he die?"

"It is the hand of God. He died in fear. He was at feud with the abbey in Edmundsbury (you who know so much, you know that). And on a day he met a fool telling fortunes, and this fool bade him look at a black monk that was behind him. Then Eustace fell in a swoon and thereafter by night and by day he talked of the monk and his eyes, and presently he died."

And again Henry crossed himself and said a prayer.

"This is the end of all. I am the last of my house. I am old and a lone man. What do you ask of me, Henry of Anjou?"

"I claim my right."

"Right? The only right a man has is to death, which is deliverance."

"My life is yet to live. I claim my right."

"You would be king! You who have seen me this day."

"Each man has his own fate. I do not fear, Stephen."

"I have feared nothing, boy. And stand here desolate. Remember me when your own hour comes. What I have done, I have done for my honor and the son which was mine. I have my reward." He spread out his arms, grasped at nothing and let them fall. "What is to do?"

"You have said it, Stephen. I would be king. Why, cousin, it must be so. There is none other man left. It is God's will."

The king flushed. "You—you boast that over my son's grave! God's wounds, boy, I hold you in my power. If I will it, you lie dead with Eustace. That—is that God's will?"

"You know. For you do not dare," Henry said coolly.

"Shame, shame!" the king said and beat his breast. "There is baseness in your soul."

"I fight a stricken man. I have said it. I fight but as I must, cousin. I would not beat you down. King you shall be while you live if you will write me your heir."

"Call you to his place!" the King muttered.

"What is, it is, cousin."

"My heir?" The king looked at him keenly. "Oh, if I had the strength of the old years to meet you with a horse between my thighs and a sword in my hand!" He raised his right arm, fist clenched, and it trembled. "That is what I wish my heir, Henry of Anjou. Think of it when you leave all."

"We waste words, cousin," Henry shrugged. The summer twilight was falling when he came out of the king's council chamber. Yves d'Eu, very carefully respectful, led him to a big stately room which looked out upon the river. He went all about it in a hurry, prying, like a dog in a strange place, then flung himself into a chair and sat twisting his hands and shuffling in the rushes on the floor.

"Pray you, my lord, does it content you?"

"No—ay—it will serve, it will serve."

"Will you sup, my lord?"

HENRY stared at him. "God's body! I will not eat nor drink till that dog Fleming is laid by the heels. You know him, sir, the knave Paul of Tournai."

"My lord, the poor rogue had his duty to do——"

"And so had you, ha? Why, man, you did yours like a knight and he like a false foul knave. No man suffers of me because he is King Stephen's man. But the rope for all rogues. Go, tie him up. You heard the king give him to me. And hark ye, the poor fool who was taken with me, bring him here. He is my man."

Sir Yves looked away. "It—it was not known, my lord."

"Say you so?" the red brows bent. "It shall be known."

And after a while when the wine and meat were on the board came Bran, shambling, wriggling, muttering. He blinked at the candle-light. "Now God have mercy, brother," he said and dropped on his knees and fell to fondling Henry's hand and kissing it.

"What, man, am I so precious to you?"

Bran looked up at him. "You remembered, brother. None other ever remembered Bran."

"Yes, I remember. I pay all debts. Up and eat, man."

The fool heaved himself up painfully and

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Henry stood square, young and full of life and very ruddy before the sallow, white-bearded king.

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stared round the room. "Is it real, brother? What should I eat? King Stephen in a pasty? What have you done, brother? The world is upside down."

"I have fought with Stephen and he is a conquered king this night. Well, God is over all. His soul was weak in him. I came to him when he had heard his son was dead."

Bran drank off his wine. "And how died he?"

"A strange tale. He met a fool who said there was a monk at his shoulder. And Eustace fell in a swoon, and is dead raving of a monk and his eyes."

"Yea, yea," Bran said. "That fool was I, brother."

"You—ay, I had my guess of that." He reached across the table and grasped the fool's hand. "You tell fortunes, do not you?" he laughed. "Do you see what you tell?"

"Bran sees men, brother. There was no monk to see, but Bran saw fear in him."

"And the devil in me?"

"Yea, yea. And God."

Henry laughed and let him go. "So. I am content."

"What is the end of it all, brother?"

"WHY, man, you come with me where I go. But first we will pay that dog Fleming his due. He is mine."

"Na, na," Bran cried. "He goes free."

"What? I swear he has not been gentle with you all this while. Speak out, fool. He had you flogged?"

"Bran has no evil for him."

"God's body! man, pluck up heart. I hold him now. What of your maid?"

Bran looked at him miserably and looked away. "She saw. It is finished. She laughed."

"So, I had my own desire to that Fleming. Now——"

"Na, na, na. He goes free, Henry. It is the first thing I ask or the last. He goes free. It makes me feel greater."

Henry looked at his wine and made it run round in the cup. "Well," he said, "well. He shall have no more of hanging than the fear. Men will call it kingly," and he laughed. "But you I call fool. By the cross, the queerest boon ever a king was asked since Christ."

"A king?"

"Stephen writes me his heir and I let the old man reign in peace for the little days that are his. Then comes my time!"

"Yea, yea, and you covet it! Fools are we, the world's poor fools, Henry my brother. Good heart on your cross."

Twilight

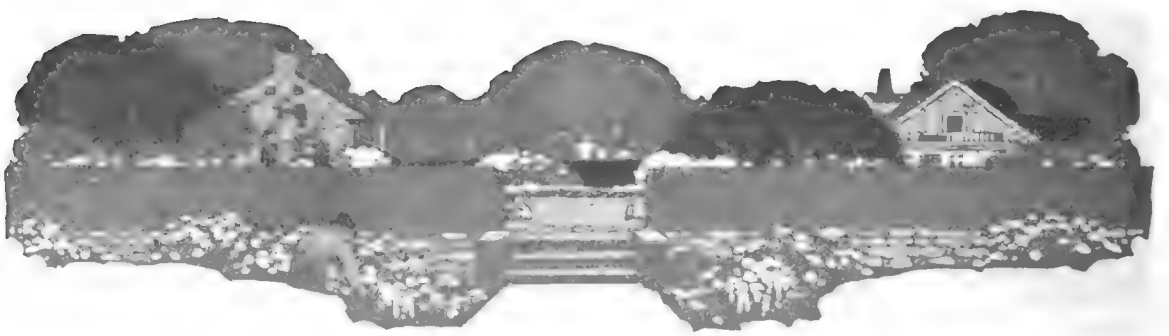
By B. Preston Clark, Jr.

THIS dusk of quiet trees along the shore,
Where floods the quiet river to the sea,
Is like the heart of God at rest once more;
So I take courage for the things to be.

A mile away the village church-bells ring
With mellow sound upon the evening air,
And robins in the brier tangle sing
With cheery echoes to my solemn prayer.

A solitary gull in rhythmic flight
Wings down the western sky of gold and gray;
Slow silence leans against the coming night,
Like some last lingering dancer of the day.

While night and day still have this meeting-place,
I shall not ask a greater gift of grace.



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Mr. Downey Sits Down

By L. H. Robbins

LITTLE Willie Downey's essay was no great shakes as a literary exercise. Any school-teacher's hand would itch for the correctional blue pencil at first sight of it. But all unaware, Willie's artless pen endangered his father's job, estranged a pair of lovers, and darkened the business and social aspects of a whole town.

JACOB DOWNEY waited in line at the meat-shop. A footsore little man was he. All day long, six days a week for twenty-two years, he had stood on his feet, trotted on them, climbed on them, in the hardware department of Wilbram, Prescott & Co., and still they would not toughen; still they would hurt; still to sustain his spirit after three o'clock he had to invoke a vision of slippers, a warm radiator, the Evening *Bee*, and the sympathy of Mrs. Downey and the youngsters. To the picture this evening he had added pork chops.

The woman next in line ahead of him named her meat. Said the butcher, with a side glance at the clock, "A crown roast takes quite a while, lady. Could I send it in the morning?"

No, the lady wished to see it prepared. Expressly for that purpose had she come out in the rain. To-morrow she gave a luncheon.

"First come, first served," thought Jacob Downey, and bode his time in patience, feeling less pity for his aching feet than for Butcher Myers. Where was the charity in asking a hurried man at five minutes to six o'clock to frill up a roast that would not see the inside of the oven before noon next day?

Now, crown roasts are one thing to him who waits on fallen arches, and telephone calls are another. Scarcely had Downey's opening come to speak for pork chops cut medium, when off went the bell and off rushed Butcher Myers.

Sharply he warned the unknown that this was Myers's Meat-Shop. Blandly he smiled into the transmitter upon learning that his caller was Mrs. A. Lincoln Wilbram.

By the audience in front of the counter the following social intelligence was presently inferred:

That Mr. and Mrs. Wilbram had just returned from Florida; that they had enjoyed themselves ever so much; that they hoped Mr. Myers's little girl was better; that they were taking their meals at the Clarendon pending the mobilization of their house-servants; that they expected to dine with the Mortimer Trevelyans this evening; that food for the dog may with propriety be brought home from a hotel, but not from the Mortimer Trevelyans'; that there was utterly nothing in the ice-box for poor Mudge's supper; that Mudge was a chow dog purchased by a friend of Mr. Wilbram's in Hongkong at so much a pound, just as Mr. Myers purchased live fowls; that Mudge now existed not to become chow, but to consume chow, and would feel grateful in his dog heart if Mr. Myers would, at this admittedly late hour, send him two pounds of bologna and a good bone; and that Mrs. Wilbram would consider herself under deep and lasting obligation to Mr. Myers for this act of kindness.

MR. MYERS assured Mrs. Wilbram that it would mean no trouble at all; he would send up the order as soon as his boy came back from delivering a beefsteak to the Mortimer Trevelyans.

He filled out a slip and stuck it on the hook.

"Now, Mr. Downey," he said, briskly.

The butcher smiled blandly into the transmitter.

But Jacob Downey gave him one tremendous look and limped out of the shop.

II

IT WAS evening in the home of Miss Angelina Lance. Twenty-seven hours had passed since Jacob Downey's exasperated exit from Myers' Meat-Shop. The eyes of Miss Angelina were bright behind her not unbecoming spectacles as she watched the face of the solemn young man in the Morris chair near the reading-lamp.

In his hand the solemn young man held three sheets of school composition-paper. As he read the pencil writing on page one he lost his gravity. Over page two he smiled broadly. At the end of the last page he said:

"D. K. T. couldn't have done better. May I show it to him?"

In the office of the Ashland (N. J.) *Bee* the solemn young man was known as Mr. Sloan. At Miss Lance's he was Sam. The mentioned D. K. T. conducted the celebrated, "Bee-Stings" column on the editorial page of Mr. Sloan's journal, his levity being offset by the sobriety of Mr. Sloan, who was assistant city-editor.

On two evenings a week Mr. Sloan fled the cares of the Fourth Estate and became Sam in the soul-refreshing presence of Miss Angelina. He was by no means her only male admirer. In the Sixth Grade at the Hilldale Public School she had thirty others; among these Willie Downey, whose name appeared on every page of the composition Mr. Sloan had read.

With a host of other sixth-graders throughout the city Willie had striven that day for a prize of ten dollars in gold offered by the public-spirited A. Lincoln Wilbram, of Wilbram, Prescott & Co., for the best schoolboy essay on Moral Principles.

"Moral principles, gentlemen; that is what we need in Ashland. How many men do you know who stand up for their convictions—or have any to stand up for?"

If the head of a department store is a bit thunderous at times, think what a Jovian position he occupies. In his cloud-girt, mahogany-paneled throne-room on the eighth floor he rules over a thousand mortals, down to the little Jacob Downeys

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Jacob Downey bode his time despite his aching feet.

in the basement, who, if they do not quite weep with delight when he gives them a smile, tremble, at least, at his frown. When a large body of popular opinion accords him greatness, were he not undemocratic to affect humility and speak small?

"I speak of common men," said Mr. Wilbram (this was at a Chamber of Commerce banquet); "of men whose living depends upon the pleasure of their superiors. How few there are with fearless eye!"

HE SCARCELY heard the laughter from a group of building contractors at a side table, who had not seen a servile eye among their workmen in many moons; for a worthy project had popped into his mind at that instant. How was the moral backbone of our yeomanry to be stiffened save through education? Why not a prize contest to stimulate the interest of the rising generation in this obsolete subject?

In many an Ashland home where bicycles, roller-skates, wireless outfits and other such extravagances were strongly desired, the question had since been asked: "Pa, what are Moral Principles?" While some of the resulting essays indicated a haziness in paternal minds, not so the production that Mr. Sloan read in Miss Lance's parlor.

"But I couldn't let you print it," said Miss Angelina. "I wouldn't have Willie shamed for anything. He may be weak in grammar, but he is captain of every athletic team in the school. He has told me in confidence that he means to spend the prize money for a genuine horse-hide catching-mitt."

"If I cross out his name, or give him a *nom de plume*?"

On that condition Miss Lance consented.

III

AT THE office next morning Sloan found the essay in his pocket and looked around the city-room for D. K. T. The staff poet-clown was no daylight saver; professing to burn the midnight oil in the interest of his employer, he seldom drifted in before half-past nine.

"See me. S. S.," wrote Sloan, and dropped Willie's manuscript on D. K. T.'s desk.

Then he jumped and gasped, and copy-readers and office-boys jumped and gasped, and the religious editor dashed frantically for the stairs, outrunning the entire staff down the hall, though he had further to go than any other man or woman there. A huge, heart-stopping shock had rocked the building, set the windows to clattering and the lights to swinging, and brought down in a cloud the accumulated dust of a quarter-century.

Within two minutes by the clock, Sloan and five reporters had started for the scene of the Rutland disaster, fifteen miles away, where enough giant-powder had gone up in one petrific blast to raze Gibraltar. A thriving town lay in ruins; hundreds of families were homeless; a steamship was sunk at her dock; a passenger train blown from the rails.

At eleven o'clock on the night following that pitiful day, Sloan journeyed homeward to Ashland in an interurban trolley-car in company with a crowd of refugees. A copy of the last edition of the *Bee* comforted his weary soul.

The first page was a triumph. Count on the office to back up its men in the field! There was the whole story, the whole horror and heartbreak, finely displayed. There were his photographs of the wreckage; there, in a box, was his interview with the superintendent of the Rutland Company; there was a map of the devastated area. Perhaps some one had found time even to do an editorial; in that case the clean-up would be complete.

Opening the paper to the sixth page, he groaned; for the first thing that caught his eye was Willie Downey's essay, at the top of D. K. T.'s column, with Willie's name below the headline.

MOREL PRINSAPLES

BY WILLIE DOWNEY
AGE 12

Morel Prinsaples is when you have a nerve to stick up for some thing.

Like last night my Father went in Mires meet shop & stood in line 15 or twenty min. wateing his tirn & when his tirn come he says to mr. Mires Ile have 6 porc chops.

at that inst. the telaphone wrang & mr. Mires slidd for it like it was 2nd base.

Hold on Mires says Pa, who got here 1st, me or that bell wringer.

Igscuse me just 1 min. says Mr. mires.

No I be ding if Ile igscuse you says Pa, 1st come 1st served is the rool of bizness all over."

But Mr. mires wyped his hands on his apern & ansered the wring & it was mrs. Will Brum, she was going to eat out at a frends so she wanted 2 lbs, bolony & a dog bone.

So then Pa give him hale columbus.

"Here I bin wateing ½ an our he said, yet when some lazy lofer of a woman who has been reading a novvle or a sleep all after noon pfhones you to rush her up some dog meet in youre Autto with gass 36 cts. & charge it to her acct. & may be you wont get youre munny for three 4 munths, wy you run to wate on her while I stand & shovle my feet in youre saw dust like a ding mexican pea own or some thing.

What says Pa is there about a cusstamer who takes the trubble to come for his meet & pay cash for it & delivvers it him self that maiks him so Meen & Lo that he hass to be pushed one side for some body that has not got Gumpshun enoughf to order her dog bones before the rush our?

Do you think that people with a telapfhone's munny is any better than mine, do you think becuase I walk in here on my hine leggs that I am a piker & a cheep skait, becuase if so I will bring along my telapfhone contract nex time & show you & then may be you will reckonnize me as a free born amerrican who dont haff to traid where I haff to play 2d fiddle to a chow pupp. Its agenst my morel prinsaples says Pa."

With theas wirds he walks out in the rane althogh his feet hurt him clear down to washington St. to the nex meet store, but by that time they were all cloased up so we had prinsaples for supper insted of porc chops.

Pa says if he run a store & had a pfhone & no body to anser it & do nothing else he would ring it's neck, becuase while the telapfhone is the gratest blesing of the aige, but a

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pfhone with out an opperater is like a ham ommalet with the ham let out. He says the reazon the Chane Stores have such a pull with the public is becuase the man behine the counter is not all the time Jilting you in the middle of your order & chacing off to be sweet to some sosciety dame with a dog 4 miles away.

Ma says she dont kno why we have a pfhone any how becuase every time she is youseing it a woman buts in & jiggles the hook & says will you pleas hang up so I can call a Dr. & when Ma hangs up & then lissens in to see who is sick, wy this woman calls up a lady frend & they nock Ma back & 4th over the wyre for ours & some times they say I bet she is lissening in on us dont you.

So as I say let us all stick up for our Morel Prinsaples like my Father come what may.

IV

BRIGHT were Miss Angelina's eyes, but not with mirth. It was unspeakable, this thing that Mr. Sloan had done. Thrice before bedtime she called his lodgings. Mr. Sloan was not in.

Before the last call, she donned her wraps and went out to Plume Street. Courageously she pulled the bell at Number Nine. Willie's mother opened the door and cried, surprised, "Why! Miss Lance."

"Is Willie here? Have you seen the paper? Will you let me tell him how it happened, and how sorry I am?"

Willie was not receiving callers this evening. He had been sent to bed without supper. The explosion at Rutland had been as nothing, it seemed, to the outburst in the Downey home.

Slowly the extent of the harm dawned upon Miss Angelina.

"It was Mrs. A. Lincoln Wilbram wanted the dog bone," said Mrs. Downey, tearfully. "Everybody will recognize her; and what Mr. Wilbram will do to us we don't need to be told. Poor Jake is so upset, he has gone out to roam in the dark. He couldn't stay in the house."

New jobs were scarce for men at his time of life, and with his feet. Dora and Jennie might have to leave high school.

"I'm sure you meant us no wrong, Miss Lance; I'm sure there was a mistake. But think how dreadful it is, after twenty-two years of having Mr. Wilbram's pay, then to turn around and backbite his wife like that, right out in print!"

Doubly troubled now, Miss Lance departed. Attracted by a quick gathering of loiterers in the avenue, she witnessed a controversy that might easily have become a police matter.

"You're a liar if you say you said all that to me!" shouted the burly Butcher Myers. "You never opened your head, you shrimp! Bawling me out in the papers and losing me my best customers! Whaddye mean?"

Back came the retort from Jacob Downey with the snarl of a little creature at bay.

"If I didn't say it to you then, you big lobster, I say it to you now. All that the paper says I said I say. What'll you do about it?"

"If I didn't say it then I say it now. What'll you do about it?"

"Hah! You!" Myers snapped his fingers in Downey's fiery face and turned away.

Miss Lance's path to the Hilldale School next morning took her past three post-boxes. Into the third she dropped a note that she had carried from home. Mr. Sloan would find her message exceedingly brief, although (or, perhaps, because) she had spent hours in composing it.

Dear Sir:
I regret to discover that you lack moral principles.
ANGELINA LANCE.

Just before the last bell, the janitor brought in a prisoner for her custody. Willie Downey's head was bloody but unbowed; three seventh-graders he had vanquished in one round. "They guyed me," said he. "They called me a Nawthor."

Morning prayer and song waited while teacher and pupil spoke earnestly of many things; while the teacher's eyes filled with tears, and the pupil's heart filled with high resolve to bring home the baseball championship of the Ashland Public School League and lay it at Miss Angelina's feet, or perish in the attempt.

V

THE A. Lincoln Wilbram prize went to a small boy named Aaron Levinsky, whose English was ninety-nine per cent. pure. Little Aaron's essay was printed as the centerpiece in Wilbram, Prescott & Co.'s page in the *Bee;* little Aaron invested his gold in thrift-stamps, and the tumult and the shouting died.

Miss Angelina Lance sat alone every evening of the week. True, Mr. Sloan had tried to right the wrong; he had called Miss Angelina on the telephone, which he should have known was an inadequate thing to do; he had also sent a ten-dollar bank-note to Willie, in care of Miss Lance at the Hilldale School, together with his warm felicitations upon Willie's success as a *litterateur*. Did Willie know that his fine first effort had been reprinted, with proper credit, in the great New York *Planet?*

True, too, the illustrious D. K. T. had written Miss Angelina an abject apology, most witty and poetic, taking all the blame to himself and more than exonerating his high-principled friend Mr. Sloan.

But the bank-note went back to its donor without even a rejection slip; and D. K. T.'s humor was fatal to his client's cause. Ghastly are they who jest in the shadow of tragedy. Mr. Sloan and D. K. T. did not know, of course; Miss Angelina had not thought it of any use to tell them of the sword which they had hung up by a thread above the heads of the Downeys.

As for Jacob Downey, he limped about amid his hardware in the basement at Wilbram, Prescott & Co.'s, careworn, haunted of eye, expecting the house to crash about his ears at any moment. One does not with impunity publish the wife of one's employer as a lazy loafer.

The A. Lincoln Wilbrams had servants again, and dined at home. To Mr. Wilbram said Mrs. Wilbram, one evening:

"It is the strangest thing. In the last month I've met scarcely a soul who hasn't asked me silly questions about Mudge and his diet. Mrs. Trevelyan and everybody. And they always look so queer."

Mr. Wilbram was reminded that while coming home that evening with a package in his hand he had met Trevelyan; and Trevelyan had inquired, "What's that? A bone for the dog?"

"To-morrow," said A. Lincoln, "I'll ask him what he was driving at."

"What was the package?" queried his wife.

HE FETCHED it from the hall. It had come to him at the store that day by registered mail.

"From Hildegarde," said Mrs. Wilbram, noting the Los Angeles postmark. Hildegarde was honeymooning among the orange groves. Wrote the happy bride:

Dear Aunt and Uncle:
Charles and I see by the paper that Mudge is hungry, so we are sending him a little present.

"What can the child mean, Abe?"

"Don't ask me," he answered. "Undo the present and see."

They loosened blue ribbons and wrappings of soft paper, and disclosed a link of bologna sausage.

Maddening? It might have been, if Hildegarde had not thought to inclose a page from the *Daily Southern Californian*, upon which, ringed with pencil marks, was a bit of miscellany, headed, "Morel Prinsaples."

They read it through to the conclusion:

So as I say let us all stick up for our Morel Prinsaples like my

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Father come what may.—Willie Downey in Ashland (N. J.) *Bee.*

"Why!—why!—it's—it's me!" cried Mrs. Wilbram. "I did telephone to Mr. Myers for two pounds of bologna and a dog bone—on the night we dined at the Trevelyans'!"

"It comes mighty close to libel," fumed Wilbram.

"How do they dare! You must see Worthington Oakes about this, Abe."

"I certainly will," he vowed.

VI

HE CERTAINLY did, as Mr. Worthington Oakes, the publisher of the *Bee*, will testify. In the front office on the editorial floor he saw Mr. Oakes for a bad half-hour, and demanded a public retraction of the insult.

At about the same time, a dapper stranger who had come up in the elevator with Mr. Wilbram held speech with Assistant City-Editor Sloan in the local room at the other end of the hall.

"Yonder's your bird," said Mr. Sloan, pointing to a poetic-looking young man at a desk in a corner.

Crossing to the poet, who was absorbed in his day's poesy and talking to himself as he versified, the stranger smiled and spoke.

"Am I addressing the celebrated D. K. T.?"

"Am, cam, dam, damn, ham, jam, lamb——"

The far-away look of genius faded out of the poet's eyes.

"Not buying," said he. "My pay-envelope is mortgaged to you book-agents for ten years to come. Ma'am, ram, Sam, cram, clam, gram, slam——"

"Books are not my line," said the dapper one briskly. "I represent the Jones-Nonpareil Newspaper Syndicate. In fact, I am Jones. I have a proposition to make to you, Mr. D. K. T., that may enable you to buy more books than you can ever read. You know, of course, what the Jones-Nonpareil service is. We reach the leading dailies of the United States and Canada——"

"Have a chair, Mr. Jones."

"Thank you. We handle some very successful writers. Malcomb Hardy, you may have heard, takes his little five hundred a week out of us; and poor Larry Bonner pulled down eleven hundred as long as he had health. His Chinese-laundryman sketches might be selling yet."

"Suspense is cruel," spoke D. K. T., eagerly. "Let the glad news come."

"Some time ago," said the syndicate man, "you printed in your column an essay in imitation of a schoolboy's. You called it Moral Principles."

D. K. T. sank back with a low moan.

"If you can write six of those a week for a year," continued the visitor, "you won't ever need to slave any more. You can burn your pen and devote the rest of your life to golf and good works."

The poet closed his eyes. "Sham, swam, diagram," he murmured.

"Does a minimum guarantee of fifteen thousand a year look like anything to you? There will, of course, be the book rights and the movie rights in addition."

"Anagram, epigram, telegram, flimflam—aha!" cried D. K. T. "Siam!" He wrote it down.

"That little skit of yours," pursued the caller, "has swept the country. You have created a nation-wide demand. My finger is on the journalistic pulse, and I know. Can you repeat?"

He drew a paper from his pocketbook.

"Here is a list of subjects your imaginary Willie Downey might start with: The Monetary System; the Cost of Living; the League of Nations; Capital and Labor——"

Over the stranger's head an office-boy whispered significantly: "Front office."

"Excuse me," said the poet, and hurried away.

With the publisher, in the front office, sat A. Lincoln Wilbram, quite purple in the cheeks. They had a file of the *Bee* before them.

"Diedrick," said Mr. Oakes, "on March eighteenth you printed this thing." His finger rested on Willie's essay. "Why did you do it?"

"What's the matter with it?" replied D. K. T.

"The matter with it," spoke Mr. Wilbram terribly, "is that it slanders my wife. It makes her out to eat dog bones. Friends of ours as far away as California have seen it and recognized her portrait, drawn by your scurrilous pen. The worst of it is, the slander is founded on fact. By what right do you air my domestic affairs before the public in this outrageous fashion?"

With agonized eyes the funny-man read the essay as far as the fateful line, "It was mrs. Will Brum."

"My gosh!" he cried.

"How did you come to write such a thing?" Mr. Oakes demanded.

"Me write that thing? If I only had!"

The facts were recalled; the sending of Mr. Sloan and many reporters to Rutland; the need of extra hands at the copy-table that day.

"They guyed me," said Willie. "They called me a Nawthor."

"I found this contribution on my desk. It looked safe. In the rush of the morning I sent it up and never gave it another thought."

"So it is really a boy's essay, and not some of your own fooling?" asked Oakes.

"A boy's essay, yes; entered in Mr. Wilbram's prize contest, eliminated by the boy's teacher and shown by her to Mr. Sloan, who brought it to the shop. I know now that Sloan meant me to change the author's name to save the kid from ridicule. If there were actual persons in it, I'm as amazed as Mrs. Wilbram."

"I wonder, Oakes," said Wilbram, "that a dignified newspaper like yours would print such trash, in the first place."

Worthington Oakes looked down his nose. D. K. T. took up the challenge.

"Trash, sir? If it's trash, why has the Ashland Telephone Company asked permission to reprint it on the front cover of their next directory?"

"Have they asked that?"

"They have; they say they will put a little moral principle into the telephone hogs in this town. And didn't a Fifth Avenue minister preach a sermon on it last Sunday? Doesn't the *Literary Review* give it half a page this week? Hasn't it been scissored by almost every exchange editor in the land? Isn't there a man in the city-room now offering me fifteen thousand a year to write a daily screed like it?"

"You can see, Wilbram," said Mr. Oakes, "that there was no intention to injure or annoy. We are very sorry; but how can we print an apology to Mrs. Wilbram without making the matter worse?"

"Who is this Willie Downey?" demanded Wilbram. "And who is the school-teacher?"

"I don't believe my moral principles will let me tell you," replied D. K. T. "I'm positive Mr. Sloan's won't let him. We received the essay in confidence."

"Enough said," Mr. Wilbram exclaimed, rising. "Good day to you. I don't need your help, anyway. I'll find out from the butcher."

VII

IT SEEMED necessary that Mr. Sloan should call at the Lance home that evening. Whatever Miss Angelina might think of him, it was his duty to take counsel with her for the welfare of Willie.

He began with the least important of the grave matters upon his mind.

"Do you suppose your *protégé* could write some more essays like the one we printed?"

"Why, Mr. Sloan?"

If Miss Angelina had responded, "Why, you hyena?" she would not have cut him more deeply than with her simple, "Why, Mr. Sloan?"

"A newspaper syndicate," he explained, "has offered D. K. T. a fortune for a series of them."

"Poor Willie!" she sighed. "He flunked his English exam. to-day. I'm afraid I shall have him another year."

"He is a lucky boy," said Sloan.

"Do you think so?"

Clearly her meaning was, "Do you think he is lucky when a powerful newspaper goes out of its way to crush him?"

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"There is no use approaching him with a literary contract?"

"Not with the baseball season just opening. His team beat the Watersides yesterday sixteen—nothing. He has more important business on hand than writing for newspapers."

Since Sloan wrote for a newspaper, this was rather a dig. Nevertheless he persevered.

"A. Lincoln Wilbram is on his trail. Do you know that Willie libeled Mrs. Wilbram?"

"Oh! Sam. Surely I know about the libel. But is—is Mr. Wilbram really—has he discovered?"

"HE CAME to the office to-day. We gave him no information; but he has other sources. He is bound to identify his enemy before he quits."

"I didn't know about the so-called slander at first," said she, "when I—when you——"

"When I promised to change Willie's name?"

"I found out when I went to them, on the night it came out in the paper. They were wofully frightened. They are frightened still. Mr. Downey has worked for Mr. Wilbram since he was a boy. They think of Mr. Wilbram almost as a god. It's—it's a tragedy, Sam, to them."

"Would it do any good to warn them?"

"They need no warning," said Miss Angelina. "Don't add to their terrors."

"I am more sorry than I can say. May I hope to be forgiven some day?"

"There's nothing to forgive, Sam. It was an accident. But don't you see what a dangerous weapon a newspaper is?"

"Worse than a car or a gun," he agreed.

As he strolled homeward along a stately avenue, wondering what he could do to avert the retribution that moved toward the Downeys, and finding that his assistant - city - editor's resourcefulness availed him naught, he heard the scamper of feet behind him and whirled about with cane upraised in time to bring a snarling chow dog to a stand.

"Beat it, you brute!" he growled.

"Yeowp!" responded the chow dog, and leaped in air.

"Don't be alarmed," spoke a voice out of the gloom of the nearest lawn. "When he sees a man with a stick, he wants to play."

Sloan peered at the speaker's face. "Isn't this Mr. Wilbram? You were at the *Bee* office to-day, sir. May I have a word with you about the Willie Downey matter?"

The loosened ribbons and wrappings disclosed a link of bologna sausage.

"Come in," said Mr. Wilbram.

VIII

ON THE first pay-day in May the impending sword cut its thread. Said a messenger to Jacob Downey: "They want you on the eighth floor." Downey set his jaws and followed.

In the mahogany-paneled room A. Lincoln Wilbram turned from the window and transfixed his servitor with eyes that bored like steel bits.

"Downey, I understand you have a literary son."

Jacob held his breath, eyed his accuser steadily, and assured himself that it would soon be over now.

"How about it, Downey?"

"I know what you mean, sir."

"Did you say the things printed there?"

The little man wasted no time in examining the newspaper clipping.

"Yes, sir, I did. If it has come to your lady's ears what I called her, I beg her pardon. But what I said I'll stick to. If I stand fifteen minutes in line in a meat-store or any other kind of store, I've got a right to be waited on ahead of anybody that rings up, I don't give a ding who she is."

"Good for you, Downey. Let me see; how long have you worked for us?"

"Twenty-three years next January, sir."

"Floor salesman all the while?"

"Since 1900. Before that I was a wrapper."

"How many men have been promoted over your head?"

"Three."

"Four," Wilbram corrected. "First was Miggins."

"I don't count him, sir. Him and I started together."

"MIGGINS was a failure. Then Farisell; now in prison. Next, McCardy; he ran off to Simonds & Co. the minute they crooked a finger at him. Last, young Prescott, who is now to come up here with his father. Could you run the department if you had it?"

"Between you and I," replied Jacob Downey, sick, dizzy, trembling, "I been running the department these fifteen years."

"How'd you like to run it from now as manager? When I find a man with convictions and courage I advance him. The man who stands up is the man to sit down. That's evolution. If you could stand up to a big butcher like Myers and talk Dutch to him the way you did, I guess we need you at a desk. What do you say?"

A desk! A chance to rest his feet! Jacob Downey stiffened.

"Mr. Wilbram, I—I got to tell the truth. I never said those things to Myers. I just walked out."

"But you said them. You acknowledge it."

"I said 'em, yes—after I got home. To the family I said 'em. When I was in the meat shop I only thought 'em."

"So Myers has told me," said Jove, smiling. "Downey, my man, you've got more than moral courage. You've got common sense to go with it. Tell young Prescott to give you his keys."

To A Great Man

By Mary Stewart Cutting

SO MANY, many years have passed
Since once you talked with me,
Yet in my heart there echoes still
Inspiring melody.

'Twas not alone the words you said
That had strange power to touch,
It was the spirit in yourself
That made them mean so much!

Perhaps you never knew—but no,
You must, unconsciously,
Have felt that our two souls had met
Where others might not see,

Or you could not have spoken, looked,
That comprehended way.
You have forgotten, long ago,
What made my life to-day!

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The Man Who Fought But Once

By Harry Wait Reynolds

IT WAS on a Saturday in late May that Toll Ritchie called me up. I jumped for the phone when the girl told me he was on the wire, for Toll, short for Tolliver, Taliaferro as the Southerners spell it—was the greatest prize-fight promoter in the world, and I had charge of the sporting page of the New York *Blade*.

"Freeman," said Toll, "would you like to take a little trip into the country with me to-morrow morning?"

Something in his voice sounded significant to me.

"Is it just a common or garden trip," said I, "or is it a trip with a punch in it?"

"Well, I don't know," said Toll. "I've got something here that might be worth looking into. If it should pan out, you would be deeply interested. If not, we'd have a nice ride anyway. Take you out into the Jersey backwoods in my car. Apple-blossoms, lilacs, mountains—that sort of thing. Come back Sunday night or Monday morning. Want to go?"

No such invitation was to be refused when it came from Toll Ritchie, and by ten the next morning we were whirling through Manhattan streets to a Jersey City ferry.

On the ferry-boat Toll took a dirty envelope, directed in lead-pencil, from his pocket. "This is the classy communication which is taking us to the country," he said, passing it over.

THE letter within was written with pencil on one-half of a sheet of smudgy, cheap note-paper. But the signature was one to command attention from either Toll Ritchie or myself. It was that of Joe Whiteburn. Whiteburn, the colored welter-weight champion, had never been knocked out. But he had been put away for life for manslaughter a few years before. I remembered him well. With a fine, free disregard for capitals the letter read as follows:

> WEST PORTAL N. J. May 25
> mr. toll richey dere sir thair is a burd up here what is a fitin machine he aint no man hes a fitin fool but he aint no fool fiter honest to God mr richey hes a wonder and a rube hayseed at that. you otto see him you cood make money offen him its a dam shame hesa milken cows and not in the ring hes a champ all right. if you come up here ile show him to you come to the new jersey state road camp above west Portal you can grab the welter weight and middle weight titles with him ime tellen you yure old friend Joe Whiteburn.

"Well," I remarked, as I folded the letter, "a man who could fight as Joe could didn't need to know how to write a letter. You thought it was worth looking up?"

"Yep," assented Toll, "Joe knows. He knows just as well as you or I do. And there isn't a thing he could make by attempting to deceive me. I made all Joe's money for him. He's simply trying to do me a good turn. His letter speaks for itself. He believes what he says. So we're on our way to a convict road camp to spend the Sabbath with a negro manslayer, and inspect a farmer who should be champion of the world."

We bowled along the old plank road across the salt meadows to Newark, through that great industrial center, through suburban Springfield, through Dunellen and Bound Brook, Somerville and Whitehouse, and so up to Clinton. Toll Ritchie was the most genial of men, with a mind replete with knowledge of life in its most interesting phases. Two hours of conversation with him was a privilege to be prized by any man, especially by the editor of a sporting page. The road was macadam, the car fast, the day lovely, the earth dressed in delicate blues and greens.

The hard road ended at Clinton.

"Ah," said Toll, as we struck the dirt, "that's what the state's got these convicts up here for, to complete this macadam state road from West Portal to Clinton."

The New Jersey state road camp was located high among the hills, and we ate our Sunday dinner there with the keepers. O'Keefe, the head keeper, was deeply interested in our mission.

"The fellow you're after furnishes our milk," O'Keefe informed us. "His name is Danny Thorn. His folks are old American stock, way back. Danny brings the milk at night. You know this camp is supposed to be a specimen of up-to-date prison methods. The prisoners lead a healthy, active, out-of-doors life, and they have all sorts of outdoor sports between supper and bedtime. Whiteburn has given boxing lessons to some of the fellows and picked up quite a handful of change. This Danny person would watch them. One night he put on the gloves with Joe, and, by cracky, Joe couldn't stand up to him. That was the way we found out about him."

"How old is he?" asked Ritchie.

"About thirty, I should say."

Toll shook his head. "That almost settles it beforehand," he said. "Too old for a beginner. Almost all fighters have been veterans at thirty."

"Well, we'll go up to his farm after dinner," said O'Keefe, "and you can get an idea of him." After dinner we drove the car out of the back gate of the camp and up as vile a piece of mountain road as I ever traveled. As we went, Ritchie tried to get some information out of Joe.

"Has this guy got any form at all?" he asked. "Does he show any style, any class in his fighting?"

Joe scratched his ear. "Mistah Ritchie," said he, "I wasn't in there long 'nuf to repote back bout his fohm. But I suah can say he's got plenty of action."

Ritchie tried again. "Does he know anything about boxing?" he demanded.

Joe scratched the other ear. "I don't reckon he does, Mistah Ritchie," he replied mildly.

Patiently Toll persevered. "I understand, Joe," he ventured, "that you didn't stay in that little bout very long, but you surely stayed in long enough to notice his defense. Is he very awkward? Did he block anything, or did he just take what you sent over?"

"Mistah Ritchie," said Joe earnestly, "he wasn't doin' any blockin'. I wuz doin' all the blockin' what wuz done."

Toll laughed and gave it up.

WE TURNED in at a mail-box and drove half a mile farther through woods and brush over a private road not much worse than the highroad outside, and at length came upon the farm set in the heart of the woods, like a green cup in the hills. As we drove down toward the red barn which made the high light in the landscape, we heard a merry hullaballoo: a dog barking, a pig squealing, a man shouting. A big black boar was running for his life, his course directed, manipulated and speeded up by an accomplished cow-dog. The dog knew his business. He kept the hog running in circles, kept the circles growing smaller and smaller, till at last he landed the hog at the man's very feet. Quick as a flash the man grabbed the boar by the hind leg. Then he walked over to the orchard, dragging the creature by the hind leg, just as if he were carrying a bag of peanuts, although the hog earnestly desired not to go.

"Look at that!" said Toll Ritchie in a hushed tone. "That hog weighs two hundred and fifty if it weighs a pound!"

Ritchie has a farm of his own, on which he spends his spare cash. We trailed along after the farmer. When the latter reached the orchard fence, he used the other hand to catch hold of the pig's ear. Then with a graceful swing he lifted the wrathful hog and dropped him in the orchard as lightly as a feather.

"My, my," murmured Ritchie, "when a two-hundred-and-fifty-pound hog gets out on my place we call in the neighbors, lemme tell you!"

Introductions and explanations over, we adjourned to a room over the wagon-house. This room was floored with matched pine boards. At one end lay a smallish mat. In the center was a horizontal bar, pretty high up. To get your hands on it called for spring in your legs. No other paraphernalia was visible; no dumbells, no bag.

"Where's your punching-bag?" asked Ritchie.

"I cut the last one to pieces some years ago, Mr. Ritchie," said Danny. "I

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punched a bag for twelve years, till I finally soured on that particular form of exercise. I've never punched one since."

He spoke in a mild, gentle way, which gave an effect of slowness. That same atmopshere hung round the whole man. Yet he was not slow, either in speech or action or thought. Neither was it a lack of energy. It was more a lack of tenseness, of irritation, of nervousness; a perfect poise, mental and physical. He seemed a man at peace with himself and the world.

He stood about five feet seven. His head bore, not the red foliage of the fighter, but a rich, glossy thatch of nut-brown. He had steady, wide-open blue eyes, with lashes indecently long for a man. Beyond the tan of exposure to sun his face carried no color, and it was drawn. Cheek and jaw muscles showed plainly; there was almost no flesh on the face. I had seen that type of countenance often—the face a man shows at the end of a hard training period. One sees it among fighters, football players and boat crews.

But Danny Thorn's face bore a look which mighty few of those others do. It was a supremely good-natured look; sunny, smiling. He had a sort of lovable aspect, which made one understand why every one called him Danny. He wore blue overalls and a blue cotton shirt, open at the throat, sleeves rolled up; and in that rig I thought he was the handsomest figure of a man I had ever seen. I think Ritchie had some of the same feeling for gazing curiously at Danny Thorn he said: "Have you always been a farmer, Mr. Thorn?"

"Oh, no," said Danny. "Only a few years. An uncle of mine died and left me this place and a little money. I worked in a bank before that."

He stripped, and for the first time I saw the clusters—networks—strings—I can't describe the amazing muscular development of the man. Those who have seen him since will know what I mean. It was not merely the big muscles which any healthy man can show, but a thousand little ones which the average fighter does not even know that he possesses. They made a network from Danny's feet to his ears, including his hands and fingers.

Then he showed us a few of his stunts. He jumped and caught the bar, using his left hand only. In visiting the zoo you may have noticed one of the larger apes hanging to a trapeze by one hand, eyes closed, somnolent, if not actually sleeping. I have seen them do it many times, and have wondered at the quality of the arm muscles which could sustain the entire weight of the body so easily that the animal was in a state of ease; perhaps asleep.

HERE the same quality was before me, except that, instead of an ugly ape, an exceedingly good-looking and shapely human being swung lazily to and fro, backward and forward, talking cheerfully the while. Frequently, casually, smoothly, he raised himself till his chin touched the bar, then came slowly down again. His performance seemed effortless; but man, man, how the little muscles did come out and play! When he lifted his body up by one arm, his back didn't look like a human back with flesh on it; more like a basket of snakes I'd say.

After a while he changed to the right hand and went through it again; not, he explained, that his left arm was tired, but that he wanted to get through with it, and he always exercised both sides alike. The muscles, he went on to say, never got tired; he tired mentally, not physically; got sick of it.

He gave us no fancy stunts; never had gone in for them. But gripping the bar with both hands he lifted his legs at right angles to the body, as if seated on the floor with legs stretched out in front of him; only here there was no floor under him. He directed me to a corner where I found half a dozen pieces of railroad steel, all of a length. He said they weighed twelve pounds each. Under his directions I laid them across his legs, one by one, from above his knees to his ankles, and there he hung by his arms, his legs held rigid in front of him, weighted with seventy-two pounds of steel. He kept the position for more than five minutes.

THE mat, he said, was for that old-fashioned stunt which is achieved by lying down flat on the back, with the hands clasped behind the head, and then coming to a sitting position without raising the heels from the floor. No other exercise, he considered, would produce the washboard stomach and abdomen so quickly. He often repeated it five hundred times or more, and only ceased when he tired of it; mentally, not physically.

Then he donned the mitts, and standing on the ball of his left foot, with heel off the floor and right foot resting on the left leg above the knee, he shadow-boxed. As he warmed to the work he let his body weight go with the blows. This had him swaying in great shape, but he was always in perfect balance. After a turn at this with feet reversed he said that was all, unless we wanted to see him swat flies. We did; and he went looking for flies. He didn't miss any. He danced along by the walls, and every time his glove flicked out, there was a dead fly. Lots of boxers try that in training-quarters, but not many of them get their fly. Jim Corbett was fair at the stunt, but he couldn't compare with this Danny person.

Such a specimen of perfect fitness I had never seen, and I had seen most of the great fighters at the end of their training period. And this man was not even in training. It was his ordinary condition.

But fitness alone does not make a fighter. The event of the day, so far as Ritchie was concerned, was a tryout between Danny and Joe Whiteburn. Joe stripped and I helped him with his gloves, while Ritchie performed the same service for Danny. The scales showed that the negro had five pounds the better in weight; but the men didn't shape that way to the eye. Joe looked the lighter as they stood ready for their work. Toll gave the high sign and they went to it.

I sha'n't go into details. It wasn't much of a tryout. Joe, a few years before the champion welter-weight of America, was there to try out an unknown amateur. Considered in that light the exhibition was ridiculous. Poor Joe! In full action he looked actually funny, and Joe isn't a funny man at all. He is one hundred and fifty pounds of black whalebone. But in front of this "fitin fool" he was weak and insignificant.

One two, one two, Danny began to shoot, and from the very first Joe began an unceasing backward march. The amazing speed, the tireless, effortless one two, one two, wind and jaw, wind and jaw, short inside blows, no let up, no respite, kept Joe off his balance. As he jumped back to get his balance, Danny slipped along after him without lifting a foot, just as if he were on skates. When Joe did lash out he was always outside, while Danny's blows always traveled the short inside route.

No wonder poor Joe couldn't "repote back" on Danny's defense. Danny's defense was speed and aggressiveness, which put his opponent on the defensive. I remembered that great little featherweight, Terry McGovern, rightly called Terrible Terry. His defense was his supreme aggressiveness. His opponents were so busy defending themselves that Terry had very little defending to do. Here was a new star with all McGovern's aggressiveness, and the possessor of speed and punching ability far beyond anything Terrible Terry had ever shown.

In the middle of the third round the show suddenly stopped. Danny looking around at Ritchie, remarked, "That's enough, I guess," and walked over to his corner. Joe had slowed to a walk and was weakening fast. Danny would not continue.

The Sunday afternoon was waning when we left. There was no business proposition from Ritchie to Danny at that time. Toll contented himself with saying a lot of sincere and pleasant things, and departed with an assurance of his return the following morning.

ON THE way to the convict camp, where we dropped Joe and the keeper, Ritchie asked directions to the nearest competent physician. A few minutes later we ran into the little village of Pattenburg and found the doctor who had been recommended by O'Keefe. He was a small, oldish man, very slovenly in his dress, but evidently highly educated and very well informed in his own profession. He had a very large and beautiful garden and I have an idea that garden was one reason why he lived in a one-horse place like Pattenburg instead of in some city; that, and his own crankiness. Crank was written all over him.

He was working in this garden when we arrived. Toll asked him if he would get into the car and go and make a thorough physical examination of Danny Thorn, reporting on the condition of the vital organs. He listened in silence until Toll finished, and then said, very precisely and condescendingly, like an old schoolmaster instructing a young and inefficient pupil:

"There is no need whatever for me to see this man Thorn. I know all about him, inside and out. I have written an article about him."

He went into the house and brought out a copy of a leading medical journal which he handed to us open at an article signed with his name. The article was headed: "The Man Who Stayed Young." Ritchie read the first line and gave a smothered exclamation which sounded profane. I looked at him in surprise. His face expressed the keenest surprise and also the keenest disappointment.

"It's all off, I guess," said he, passing me the periodical. "Read the first line."

The first line assaulted my eye. "Daniel Thorn, a farmer of Hunterdon County, New Jersey, is forty-five years old." We

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looked at each other. Ritchie shrugged, rose and courteously returned the magazine to its owner.

"The examination has become unnecessary," said he, "and it is also unnecessary to take your time while I read this article. I see that the idea which brought me here is impossible."

"Please explain," commanded the doctor. Toll explained.

"Men do not start a fighting career at forty-five," he concluded. "It isn't done. Only one man, Fitzsimmons, ever stayed in the ring until that age, and he was a phenomenon. I don't see how Thorn can be forty-five years old, but if your statement is correct the fact is fatal."

"If you could have spared ten minutes to read my article," replied the doctor in a chilly tone, "it would have modified your pessimistic conclusion. It certainly is a matter of indifference to me whether Daniel Thorn goes into pugilism or not; but so far as his age is concerned, while he is forty-five in years, he is no more than twenty-eight in physique. His body has remained young; his arteries soft—that is, young—his blood pressure low. Physically he is exactly what he looks to be—a young man. I have examined him more than once, both for the pleasure of going over such a perfect human specimen and for the purpose of verifying my conclusions for science."

"How has he produced this result," asked Ritchie.

"He has never been any other way," replied the doctor curtly. "His body is clean as a baby's. There is no poison in it. The body of the average adult is choked with poison. How he has done it you can ask him. That is his system. But I am prepared to swear to the results."

Ritchie was silent all through supper, which we got at the Pattenburg hotel. He was silent when we started back to camp, driving the car slowly. But finally he came out of his brown study and stepped on her tail.

"Well, what's the verdict?" I demanded.

"The verdict is that I'm going to do it," declared Ritchie seriously. "On the surface it's the act of a lunatic to put a new man forty-five years old into the ring. But I have figured it this way: In every line of human endeavor we get a phenomenon now and then—men who break all traditions, do things that no one else ever did. I believe that's just what this man is. I'm going to risk it."

IN THE long chilly May twilight of those uplands we sat on Danny's porch and talked with him. At one end of the porch a fireplace had been built of stones from the field, and in it logs from Danny's woodlot were blazing. We exclaimed at the rare sight of an outdoor fireplace. Danny smiled.

"Makes it cheerful to sit out here spring and fall evenings," he remarked amiably. "I put it up myself." As soon as he sat down the cow-dog came and lay down at his feet. Then a sunny-haired little girl of four or five, his youngest, climbed into his lap, where she lay quiet and content. And finally two small yellow kittens, one after the other, crawled up his leg and then up his arm to his shoulders, where they perched, chewing the hair on the back of his neck and licking behind his ear. The scene told a volume about the man.

"How did you ever do it?" demanded Ritchie, after repeating what the doctor had told him.

"Why, when I was a kid I was crazy over athletics and sports," explained Danny. "The fall after I graduated from high school I went into the bank. That meant sedentary, indoor life. It was then I adopted regular exercises such as you saw me do to-day. I've been doing them regularly for twenty-seven years; never missed a day. Then I got one thing and another out-of-doors—baseball, bicycling, swimming—and for the last six years I've had outdoor life with heavy work up here. That was one part of it. Diet was the other part. I got the training-table bill of fare and lived on that. First my mother and then my wife saw that I had it. I've never taken a drink or a smoke in my life. My idea was never to do anything not allowed in the training period."

"MAN, man, what will-power you must have!" exclaimed Ritchie.

"Well, not about the exercises," ruminated Danny thoughtfully; "I liked to do them. I couldn't get along without them. It took some will-power about the eating, and does yet. And there was a time when I wanted to smoke pretty badly. All the other boys did. And yet—" he grinned, "I guess it took more will-power to cut out the pie than the smokes. But all that's long ago. It doesn't require any will-power to keep to training now. It's become the habit of a lifetime."

Then Toll made his offer. He took Danny up into high places and showed him the world and promised it to him; a meteoric career in the ring, the welter-weight championship, the middle-weight championship, perhaps the championship of the world; and at terms which would bring Danny wealth as well as glory. It was a phenomenal offer, coming from a man like Ritchie, who was master of the pugilistic situation, to an unknown amateur forty-five years old. No such offer was ever made in the world, before nor since. And do you know what that farmer did? Just sat there and smiled and shook his head. Nothing moved him. He would not go into the ring.

"What's your reason?" demanded Toll desperately at last. "What's holding you? Is it more money?"

"Oh, no," said Danny in that placid way of his. "It isn't money. You've been more than generous. I think you've offered me more than I'm entitled to, considering that you would be taking all the risk and I none."

"Then what's keeping you?" urged Toll.

It was easier to demand the man's reasons than to get them. They came out slowly, bit by bit, like pulling a tooth to get each one. In the first place he was not of prize-ring stock. Far from being proud of going into the ring under the most complimentary conditions ever offered an amateur, he would regard it as a loss of caste. Nothing, for instance, would induce him to fight under his own name. This, he acknowledged, might be false pride; but false or true he had it, and his "folks," he said, had it worse than he did. His "folks" would be very much opposed to his becoming a professional prize-fighter. His "folks" would be ashamed of him.

Secondly, we wormed out of the man that he was sensitive about his age. If the venture turned out as Toll predicted, and he became famous, the secret could not be kept. He would be recognized, the sporting writers would eventually learn his age; they would joke about it; the papers would call him grandpa!

He acknowledged, however, that his love of the sport—he had seen every great fight in the past twenty-five years and knew the methods of every great fighter—his love of the sport might overbalance these two objections, where it not for a third and greater one. The insuperable obstacle was that he didn't like to hurt anybody; that is, hurt 'em bad. He absolutely refused to knock a man out. He loved friendly boxing, he liked to box for points. But he didn't like brutality—for himself. His interest in the sport enabled him to sit through a mill in which other men mauled each other, but for himself—nothing doing.

I looked at the man, surrounded by kittens, dog and baby. I remembered how definitely he had stopped the bout in the wagon-house when he saw Joe Whiteburn beginning to gasp before him; and I understood Danny Thorn. Talk as Ritchie might, it all came back to the same thing: successful fighting involved brutality, and brutality was not to his taste.

We parted friends, though Ritchie was a sorely disappointed man.

"Shall we get back home to-night?" he inquired briefly, as he pushed the car's nose out of the woods into the highway. I assented, and we traveled many miles in silence. We were half-way home before Toll spoke again. Then, "Well," said he, "I guess you have to hand it to that man. There were a few minutes up there when I could have cussed him out for an obstinate fool. But I guess he knows what he's about—him and his outdoor fireplace and his dogs and his cats and his babies!"

AND, as I happen to know, Toll did retain a very deep respect and liking for the man who had turned him down, and thereafter always sent him tickets to all fights which he promoted.

I went away to the Great War soon after this episode, and was gone two years. I heard that Danny Thorn tried to enlist and was refused on account of his age; but that the Government used him at its training-camps to give physical training to its drafted men. It was the summer of 1920 before I was back on my old job and got in touch with Toll Ritchie once more. He was arranging a fight for the welter-weight championship of the world between Micky Dean, the American champion, and a European of uncertain antecedents named Marceau, who hailed from Paris, called himself a Frenchman, and was champion of France and England.

This Marceau had knocked out every one in his class in France and England, and had also beaten all the Americans over there who had gone against him. For a year or more back he had had to go outside his class for fights. I had myself seen him drop Bartley, the English middle-weight champion. He was built all in a heap like Joe Walcott, and his style was a good deal like Joe's too. He could mix in and make a slashing bear-cat mill of it like Joe, or, like Joe again, box at long range. He carried a pair of terribly heavy guns and shot to the mark with them. He was a murderous scrapper, and I confess I could not see our Micky rocking him to

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"Look at that!" said Toll in a hushed tone. "That hog weighs two hundred and fifty if it weighs a pound!"

sleep. I asked Toll for his private opinion. He shook his head.

"The Frenchman is the goods," said he. "I'm afraid the world welter crown is going to leave our Micky's red head."

The event was exciting sensational interest. Micky was the idol of the hour among the fans, a big, jolly; red-headed Irish boy, a game, hard-working fighter. Marceau was on hand, supremely confident, and national pride was roused. The fight should have taken place in Madison Square Garden; but, although the law of Governor Whitman's régime forbidding prize-fights in New York had been repealed, Governor Smith had not yet appointed his new prize-fight commission, and the fight had to be put over in Newark. It was scheduled to take place in an armory seating fourteen thousand people.

I was hardly prepared for the throng of masculine humanity that I found surrounding the armory. For certain things, notably restaurants and amusements, Newark goes to New York. On this night the reverse had happened. New York had come to Newark, and Newark was unable to handle the situation. The mob of men was shrieking and cursing, milling like ten thousand cattle on the Western plains. Thousands had paid outrageous prices for their seats and were afraid that they would be unable to get in. Other thousands feared they would not be able to get tickets. All feared they would not see the fight. There was no police supervision whatever.

THE press entrance was locked. All the attendants, in fact, were out at the big front entrance trying to handle the mob. I was forced to join the crowd that strained toward the entrance. When I got fairly into that mob, I lost power of individual action. I moved when the crowd moved. Finally I found myself just behind an enormous negro, with legs like fence-posts. There was an unusual percentage of colored men in the crowd, because of Jed Sills, the big black fighter who was to appear in one of the preliminaries.

Desperate and unashamed, I attached myself to that huge negro like a limpet to a rock of the sea. He, for his part, was so excited that he did not know that a white man was hanging like grim death to his waistline. Like Cæsar, he was "one among them all who held his place." Solid as a pile-driver, he prevailed against the surge while his great arms flailed the air, and his great voice bellowed threats against any one who threatened his place. He plowed through and took me with him. I landed inside with my head and face wrapped in my own shirt, as near panic as I ever want to be.

When I landed, my coat was gone, my hat was gone, and the back of my shirt had been pulled straight up over my head, where its tails dangled in my face. Gasping and cursing, I disentangled the thing. As I rammed it into my trousers behind my hand encountered a large expanse of bare and blushing back where my underwear had been torn away bodily. I found that my watch in my fob pocket was broken. They had, however, left me my breeches.

My journey was not yet half over. I had to get down to the press-table, where I could see that fight and report it. But every aisle was packed with a solid mass of standing men; every seat was filled, and it was not a good-natured crowd which would permit a fellow mortal to climb over its persons or its chairs. I turned to the gallery stairs. In the gallery things were just as bad. It was impossible for me to reach any point from which I could see well enough to do any adequate reporting. As I stood there glum and desperate, my eyes roved up to the ceiling of the huge armory.

There I saw iron rafters or girders spanning the great space from wall to wall, and on those rafters in mid air, high above the multitude, were perched human figures. There was only one possible means of ascent. Hanging at intervals just over the gallery railing were slim iron rods running up to the fanlights in the roof. A sort of wheel was attached to the lower end of each

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rod, and by the manipulation of this the fanlights could be opened for ventilation.

"I can climb that thing," I muttered.

I went up the hanging rod, hand over hand, until I reached the rafter. Out on this, about eight inches wide, I walked until I reached a point from which I had an excellent view of the ring. On my way I passed many colored men. As I straddled over them they would look up and say mildly and a little anxiously, "Watch yo' step, man."

Not till I reached my seat did I find a white man, sitting a few feet beyond me, with two colored boys between. He was a fresh, mouthy semi-American little cuss, with no sense to begin with, and, though the land was dry, with two or three drinks in him. He occupied himself loudly and continuously with comments on the qualities of the various fighters billed to appear. This concerned me not at all until he began to air his expert criticism as to the abilities of Jed Sill, the colored pugilist, who was to fight a white man. Sill, he opined, had no more chance of licking his opponent than a post-war New York landlord had of getting into heaven. I began to shiver and to shake. I got up, climbed over the two intervening coons and sat down beside the young white ass.

"My boy," said I, "look below you."

He looked down. Without giving him time to speak I talked fast and softly.

"I saw the race fist fights in front of the bulletin-boards in Johnson's time," said I. "How would you like a race fight up here? If you keep on with that kind of talk up here, one of these smokes'll push you down there just as sure as God made little apples. You may drag him with you, but that won't help you any. You'll be dead. Do you understand? Dead. They'll take you home all squshy."

I scared him, and he closed his mouth. I was sorry, so far as he was concerned. I would rather have liked to see him go overboard. But I didn't care to go with him, as in all likelihood I would have if a race war started on that eight-inch beam.

A peculiarity of the boxing game is that the patron who pays the freight never knows when the show is going to begin. Baseball, theatre and the circus apparently have no difficulty in running on a schedule. But schedule has no place in a fight-promoter's life. The present occasion was no worse than others, but I noticed it more because I was sitting on a rafter fifty feet up in the air. Not till the boys hanging to the rafters began to howl for action and the gallery gods to stamp and roar in unison were the doors locked and the first victim brought forth for sacrifice. The three preliminaries were well above the ordinary, and the semi-final bout which preceded the big go put the fans into good humor and whetted to a keen edge the appetite for the real show following.

USUALLY a roar from ten thousand throats greets a champion marching down the aisle from his dressing-room with the stately tread of an emperor. But there was no roar on this occasion, and no imperial gait. The aisles were packed with human sardines. Worming his way down from his room the pugilist came, and the crowd, recognizing him as a fighter, hunched a little closer together and let him squeeze through.

So came the challenger, so short and so hidden in his little army of handlers that no one on the main floor could distinguish him and no cheer greeted him. From my rafter I could see him perfectly. Squat, wide and swart, with bull neck and scowling brow, he looked the murderous scrapper he was. The long, shapeless gray dressing-gown which swept the canvas effectually concealed his fighting lines. I noticed that his arms hung nearly to his knees. A hard looker if there ever was one; and although looks never beat a good man, I remembered that he was the first and only European who had consistently dropped our fighters in France.

The crowd gave him a good hand, but he made no response whatever; just stood and contemptuously stared, or rather glared, at them.

A roar from the galleries. There came Red Micky Dean. They knew him by his crimson top. Picking his way jovially through the crowd, his mouth stretched in a wide, good-natured grin, his head bobbing right and left in response to cries of "Attaboy Micky," "Kill him Micky," the game youngster made his slow way to the ring. The fans opened up as he crawled under the ropes. Ear-splitting yells—next to the big scrap itself there is nothing the fan loves so well.

BEFORE Micky had a chance to sit down on the waiting stool Marceau slid across the canvas like a cat, grabbed Micky's arms and scowled at his bandages, gave the Irish boy a long, sneering look in the eyes and slipped back to his own corner. Micky waved a hand at his receding back, and made a jesting remark to a second. Careless and confident Micky, full of nerve and pep; but can you do the trick to-night?

When the referee called the men to the center for final instructions, the covering robes were slipped off, and for the first time the crowd could compare the fighting lines and conditions of the two. Micky's trim, well-proportioned body got scant attention. They had seen him before. All eyes were turned on Marceau. He tood five inches shorter than Micky, and looked at least a foot wider at the shoulders. He showed a Tom Sharkey chest, the arms long, the forearms very heavy and thickly corded with muscle, while his shoulder, back and biceps were so developed that he looked muscle-bound; a suspicion that he was soon to dissipate. He tapered to a waist which seemed small until one compared it with Micky's; then it looked big. Micky had three pounds the better in weight, but he didn't show it. It was his height that did it.

The ugly temper of the invader was shown by his first act in the fight. As the clang of the bell brought the two men into the center, Micky offered to shake hands. Marceau struck the friendly glove aside, and a low growl of disapproval came from the Dean rooters in the crowd. Marceau leaped in, his arms flailing. Flail is the word. He used his arms as if they were clubs that he had picked up somewhere and brought into the ring with him. He twisted his body round to one side, his arms going with it. Then as he snapped back, his gloves came around at the end of stiff, extended arms for all the world like flails.

Micky pecked with his left. He might as well have been a baby. Then he tried to uppercut with right to the wind. And he stepped in too far, or rather he didn't step out quickly enough. Those slashing clubs came swishing round. The Frenchman's left glove swept Micky's guard away, and the following right came crashing through, well back on the jaw. Micky came over the ropes right down among the men at the ringside—and he was out. Yes, out if ever a man was out.

He was lifted back into the ring and the crowd stretched to see, silent in its intensity. But one near enough to observe those eyes, those twitching muscles, would know that Micky would never hear any of that count. As he was lifted on to the canvas, the Frenchman peered once at his ghastly countenance, then turned to his corner. He knew the fight was over.

When the count was taken, pandemonium broke loose. There was a note of menace in the hoarse yells. Men shook their fists, and ever and anon came the crash of another row of seats as it went into kindling wood under the feet of men who danced with rage upon it.

A prize-fight audience is the most heartless on earth. In one instant it will forsake an adored champion and yell for the man who has knocked him out. But in this case, race pride entered in, and also rage at not getting their money's worth. The championship had been taken away from America, and it had been taken in less than one minute's fighting. The crowd had paid big money to see a big fight, and there had been no fight. There was something insulting and contemptuous in the way Marceau had stretched out his hand and taken the championship with one blow, and in his sneering indifference to both the praise and the blame of his audience. Leathern lungs bellowed insults at Toll Ritchie, insults at Marceau.

Fourteen thousand men bawled at Toll Ritchie to give them the show they had paid for. There lay the poor defeated ex-champion, head rolling, handlers working to bring him back to the bitter consciousness of what he had lost. There sat the victor in his corner, still glowering and contemptuous. And there sat Toll Ritchie talking to the new champion and his manager, quite heedless of the crowd, which grew madder and uglier with every second.

"AFTER his signature already!" yelled the crowd sneeringly at Toll. "Kill him!" shouted some one; and "Kill him, kill him, kill him," rang through the hall. Then they took up the one-two, one-two-three stamp. That drowned all other noise, and the fourteen thousand settled down to make a good job of it. Toll still talked with the two Frenchmen, heads close together, oblivious to the uproar. Suddenly he stepped to the center of the ring and held up a hand. Gradually, unwillingly, the noise ceased. Much as the crowd was enjoying itself, it wanted to hear what Toll had to say. Toll was a good waiter. He would not utter a single word until the house was perfectly silent. Then his voice came easily and naturally, with a certain quality in it which of itself was quieting and restorative to sanity.

"Men," said he, "I have been explaining to the new champion that in view of the very abrupt termination of the championship bout to-night, of the keen disappointment of you good people who are the backbone of the game, who pay all the freight

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No handshake was offered the Frenchman this time. They met head on at the clang of the bell.

and who paid many dollars each to come here to-night, that you want to see him in action with another man. I have told him that the stage is set, the crowd here, he in condition, and that he could set forth no valid reason for refusing."

The crowd saw a chance for a cheer and went to it. When they were still again, Toll continued:

"Men, the new champion of the world through his manager named his price for going through another fight to-night, saying that, after whipping the best we had, there was no fear of his losing the title. He has agreed for a price to meet any man I can bring into the ring. Men, I can furnish the price; I don't know whether I can furnish the man or not. But I'm going to try."

He paused dramatically. Then he raised his voice and called in ringing tones: "I know the man I want is in this house to-night. I am respecting his wishes in not calling him by name. Is he man enough to come forward and keep the world championship in America?"

The crowd was dead silent, stricken dumb and motionless with astonishment and curiosity. No one had the slightest idea as to whom he referred. Twenty seconds they waited. Then through the murmurous stillness came an even, placid voice: "All right, Toll. Don't let the Frenchman get away."

THEY listened curiously as Toll shouted instructions to him where to find a dressing-room; watched curiously as he made his way back, stepping over seats and men, and then a few minutes later down again to the ringside in a shapeless robe. They gazed with absorbed intensity as the dressing-gown fell to the canvas and the figure of this new fighting man stood forth. The numerous professional fighters scattered through the ringside seats could not take their eyes off him. Even the fighting demon over in the corner was paying some attention to the marvelous body he had agreed to come to grips with. No wonder. There was no overdevelopment in that beautiful form. It simply combined grace and power as a leopard or a panther does.

No handshake was offered Marceau this time. They met head on at the clang of the bell.

Danny began to beat his opponent to the punch at once. He was the faster of the two. He drew blood with every blow. This was real fighting. The intensity of interest which it aroused was shown by the deep stillness of the house. The sound of the blows could be plainly heard. More blood; more and more; Marceau's blood, all of it. How could a human being stand up under such blows? But Marceau was standing, just where he started. He had gone back not one inch, and he was fighting like a gorilla. But he couldn't land. Danny had the speed of him. When he punched straight, Danny beat him to it. His round, stiff-arm, club-like punches that had brought him the championship Danny stopped with his shoulders.

Two minutes gone; both men where they started; neither would back up; neither could go forward; the champion a mass of blood; his face looked caved in; the nose looked broken; plenty of blood on Danny too, but it was Marceau's blood.

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The house was still quiet. This was something different. They were not used to such fighting. There would be no noise until one of the fighters showed a distress-signal by giving ground, which neither showed any sign of doing as yet.

Then Marceau twisted, jumped into the air and brought those awful arms around once more. Danny stopped the left glove with his shoulder, but the right one slipped over and caught his jaw, far back by the ear. The very punch that put poor Micky Dean over the ropes and out of the championship just a few minutes before. And again it did its work. Danny crumpled to the floor. He was not out; for he crawled to the ropes and pulled himself up to one knee. No, not out; but badly hurt, dazed and fog-eyed. The fans were quiet as the count began. This wasn't what they wanted to see. Toll Ritchie's face was rigid, expressionless, his eyes glued to that kneeling form.

As the referee said nine, Danny got up. Instantly the swart devil was on him, all over him. Danny was trying to fight; but the speed and form were missing. He had never been a fancy boxer, knew nothing of defensive work; and his poor, muddled head could not help him. So he did what he knew how to do. That was to fight, and never stop fighting. There was little power in him, and Marceau punished him frightfully. Both were covered from head to foot with gore, and red spots appeared upon the canvas.

Marceau had been punching him now for half a minute, hitting him as he would a punching-bag, measuring and putting everything he had into the blow, with no fear of a comeback. And yet he couldn't put the finishing touch to the business. Danny was still standing up under the grueling punishment, still fighting back. And suddenly it came over me that his blows were gathering steam. At the very instant that I saw it, I saw Toll Ritchie lean farther forward and something cracked that expressionless mask which his face had put on. And one instant later fourteen thousand fight fans took notice.

They couldn't help it. With ten seconds to the bell Danny was fighting; actually doing something; the steam was all but back in his punches; we could see Marceau's head snap back time and again. During the very time that he was undergoing that bitter, relentless punishment he was coming back; his system was recuperating itself, gathering back its strength, putting the power back into his punch. Ah, Danny, Danny Thorn, it was in that minute you showed what a life of training meant, what a body with no poisons in it could do!

Five seconds to the bell, and he began to beat the champion to the punch. The bell clanged, and hell broke loose. No pen could describe the noise. All that went before was mild and gentle in comparison to this. In the gallery section after section of seats went down. Looking over there one could see nothing but a dense smoke and dust screen with outlandish forms looming hazily in one devilish mixup. Whether there were wounded or dead over there no one could tell, and I guess no one cared.

DANNY was so surrounded by his handlers that we could see little of him. Marceau was gesturing wildly. Something seemed wrong with him. It was a long minute for me, full of anxiety. Could Danny really come back? Was the minute long enough to do him any real good? The minute was all but gone. The seconds stood away. It could now be seen that both fighters were bleeding badly. Danny's face looked like nothing so much as raw hamburger steak. But there was something more than broken skin the matter with the foreign fighter's face. The nose was all one-sided, its bridge was gone and his jaw looked funny; there was something the matter there.

The bell sounded. Danny leaped across the ring and they met with a crash, not in the center, but over near the champion's corner. Danny's head was clear again; He was fighting faster than ever before. He was using his heaviest artillery. Marceau was standing the brunt again; but it was the same old story. He wouldn't break ground. He had plenty of steam, but he was too slow for the marvel in front of him. He twisted and leaped again into the air. There came the same deadly stiff-arm, half pivot blow that spelled disaster to the recipient. But Danny was using his head.

As Marceau started the blow, he unavoidably exposed one side of his body to attack; that is, if a man were swift enough to get in there and out again before the champion could connect. That is what Danny did, and, oh, man! what a wallop! That blow was heard in the farthest corner of the armory. The gallery gods heard it and gave tongue. And Marceau? Caught in midair, his own lead nullified, he was turned completely round by the impact of that awful heart blow. As he started to crumple he took two more: a swinging, slashing left to the already broken jaw and a crashing right to the heart again.

It was over. The swarthy champion of the world went to the board and remained there. Not a semblance of a move did he make. He was all out before he struck the canvas.

There was Danny Thorn, his face in ribbons, but able to smile. There was a crowd of madmen. There was Toll Ritchie on a chair waving his hat. Never had Toll done such a thing as show emotion at a fight before. And down by the ringside the hard-baked maulers were all but insane.

It was an hour before I could get to Danny. The professional fighters in the audience made a massed guard around him and kept him from being torn to pieces by the crowd. He said not a word, but grinned at me out of those wide-open, steadfast blue eyes of his. And that's the true story of the phenomenon, the meteor, the marvel of the ring, the man who fought once and never would fight again.

THE fiction feature of the July issue of EVERYBODY'S will be a complete novelette, "The Wax Cylinder," by David Gray, author of a great variety of stories, ranging from the fox-hunting tales gathered in book form under the title "Gallops," to the series of navy stories reprinted in the volume, "Ensign Read."

A young war veteran gets a weird message of so extraordinary a nature that he cannot ignore it. Thereafter a succession of thrilling episodes on land and sea involves him in a murder mystery, a love affair, and a stirring fight for a rich inheritance against a criminal ring headed by an arch-villain of diabolical talents.

"The Wax Cylinder" is a brisk, eventful story of adventure, mystery and romance, packed with action and suspense. Look for it in the new "standard" size EVERYBODY'S, out on the news-stands June 15th—eight days earlier than formerly.

David Gray

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If Winter Comes

By A. S. M. Hutchinson

Author of "Once Aboard the Lugger," "The Happy Warrior," etc.

VII

THE STORY—TO BE CONCLUDED NEXT MONTH

IN THE year of 1912, Mark Sabre, at the age of thirty-four, is living with his wife, Mabel, in the English country town of Penny Green, suburb of Tidborough, where he is associated with the house of Fortune, East & Sabre, ecclesiastical and scholastic furnishers and designers. His specialty is the publication of educational text-books and his hobby a projected masterpiece to be known as "Sabre's England."

Mabel's fondness for gossip and the exclusive society of social equals, her practicality and her lack of imagination sometimes irritate Mark. She is indifferent to his taste for books, his constant groping for light on the odd business of life, his commonplace friends, and his occasional sallies of humorous comment.

One morning as Sabre is bicycling toward Tidborough he stops to exchange greetings with Lord and Lady Tybar, recently returned after two years' absence abroad. Lady Tybar, who before her marriage had been Nona Holiday, was an old friend of Sabre's.

On reaching the office Mark learns that his junior business associate, Twyning, has been taken into partnership by the Reverend Sebastian Fortune, senior member of the firm. Mark, mindful of Fortune's similar promise to him, asks the elder man for an explanation, but fails to get a satisfactory one. On the same day he arrives home in time to receive a note from Nona Tybar inviting him to call.

Mabel's comments on Nona's letter reveal her jealous suspicions. Mark's patience is further strained by the mannerisms and positive opinions of her luncheon guest, the Reverend Mr. Boom Bagshaw.

A few days later Nona Tybar comes to see Sabre at his office, where she inspects his work with a friendly interest. Sabre begins dimly to realize that she is concealing some unhappiness.

At their next meeting, an accidental one, she tells him that her marriage with Tybar, who, for all his captivating charm, is utterly without a scrap of moral principle, was a mistake—that she should have chosen him, Mark.

One morning at the office, Fortune introduces the son of Mark's rival associate, Twyning, as a new member of the staff. Then Mark reads a plea from Nona, asking him to take her away. War is declared the same day, and in the excitement Sabre receives a second letter announcing Nona's intention to stick by her husband, who has been commissioned. Sabre is rejected for army service because of a heart affection.

Young Perch, a neighbor who is about to enlist, asks Mark to find a companion for his widowed mother. Sabre recommends the daughter of his works' foreman, Effie Bright, who proves so suitable a choice that Perch leaves at once. Fortune, together with Twyning, whose son has joined up, hints broadly that it is Sabre's turn and is chagrined when he tells them of his unsuccessful attempt to enlist.

After word comes of Lord Tybar's receipt of the Victoria Cross, Sabre again attempts to qualify for the ranks and is again refused. The news of Young Perch's death in France comes as a tremendous shock to his mother, who dies while Mark is relieving Effie at her bedside. His devotion to "those strange people" results in another quarrel with Mabel. Hearing of the new Derby enlistment plan, Sabre sets out once more for the nearest recruiting station, and is elated when accepted for duty.

Shortly after his departure for France, Mabel employs Effie Bright as a companion. Six months later Mark is recommended for a commission and returns to England for training. On his brief leave at home, Mabel's unfairness culminates in Effie's dismissal. Meanwhile, Lord Tybar dies in a characteristically gallant action. Sabre returns to the front and is so badly wounded in knee and shoulder that he is discharged.

Five months afterward, his friend Hapgood, who visits him at Penny Green, notices the increasing tension between Mabel and her husband, who is convalescing slowly and is unable to walk without a stick. Two months later, when Hapgood returns, he is astonished to find Mabel absent and Effie Bright, with a baby, presiding in her stead. Hapgood, who is invited to luncheon, continues his story.

PART FOUR

Chapter Two (*Continued*)

I

I MURMURED the polite thing. He was staring at the two places, frowning a bit. "Half a minute," he said and hopped off on his old stick. Then I heard him talking to this mysterious girl. At least I heard her voice first. "Oh, I can't! I can't!"

Then Sabre: "Nonsense, Effie. You must. You must. I insist. Don't be so silly."

Then a door slammed.

Well, I ask you! If I didn't say to myself, "The plot thickens," if I didn't say it, I can promise you I thought it. I did. And it proceeded to curdle. The door that had slammed opened and presently in comes Sabre with the girl. And the girl with the baby in her arms. Sabre said in his ordinary, easy voice—he's got a particularly nice voice, has old Sabre—"This is a very retiring young person, Hapgood. Had to be dragged in. Miss Bright. Her father's in the office. Perhaps you've met him, have you?"

Well, I don't know what I said, old man. I know what I thought. I thought just precisely what you're thinking. Yes, I had a furiously vivid shot of a recollection of old Bright as I'd seen him a couple of hours before, of his blazing look, of his gesture of wanting to hurl the Tables of Stone at me, and of his extraordinary remark about Sabre—I had that and I did what you're doing: I put two and two together and found the obvious answer and I jolly near fell down dead, I did. Jolly near.

But Sabre was going on, pleasant and natural as you please. "Miss Bright was here as companion to my wife while I was in France. Now she's staying here a bit. Put the baby on the sofa, Effie, and let's get to work. I'd like you two to be friends. Hapgood and I were at school together, you know, about a thousand years ago. They called him Porker because he was so thin."

The girl smiled faintly, I put up an hysterical sort of squeak, and we sat down. The meal wasn't precisely a banquet. We helped ourselves and stacked up the soiled plates as we used them. No servants, d'you see? That was pretty clear by now. No wife, no servants, no wedding-ring: nothing but old Bright's daughter and old Bright's daughter's baby—and—and—Sabre.

I suppose I talked. I heard my voice sometimes. The easy flow Sabre had started with didn't last long. The girl hardly spoke. I watched her a lot. I liked the look of her. She must have been uncommonly pretty in a vivacious sort of way before she ran up against her trouble, whatever it was. I say whatever it was. I'd no real reason to suppose I knew; though mind you, I was guessing pretty shrewdly it was lying there on the sofa wrapped up in what d'you call'ems—swaddling clothes. Yes, uncommonly pretty, but now sad—sad as a young widow at the funeral, that sort of look. It was her eyes that especially showed it. Extraordinary eyes. Like two great pools in shadow. If I may quote poetry at you,

> Her eyes were deeper than the depth
> Of waters stilled at even.

And all the sorrow in them of all the women since Mary Magdalen. All the time but once. Once the baby whimpered and she got up and went to it and stooped over it on the other side of the sofa from me so I could see her face. By Gad, if you could have seen her eyes then! Motherhood! Lucky you weren't there, because if you've any idea of ever painting a picture called Motherhood you'd ha' gone straight out and cut your throat on the mat in despair. You certainly would.

Well, anyway, the banquet got more and more awkward to endure as it dragged on, and mighty glad I was when at last the girl got up without a word—and picked up the baby and left us. Left us. We were no more chatty for being alone, I can promise you. I absolutely could not think of a word to say, and any infernal thing that old Sabre managed to take up seemed complete and done to death the minute he'd said it.

Then all of a sudden he began. He fished out some cigarets and chucked me one and we smoked like a couple of exhaust-valves for about two minutes and then he said, "Hapgood, why on earth should I have to explain all this to you? Why *should* I?"

I said a tiny bit sharply—I was getting a bit on edge, you know—I said, "Well, who's asked you to? I haven't asked any questions, have I?"

Sabre said: "No, I know you haven't asked any, and I'm infernally grateful to you. You're the first person across this threshold in months that hasn't. But I know you're thinking them—hard. And I know I've got to answer them. And I want to. I want to most frightfully. But what beats me is this infernal feeling that I *must* explain to you, to you and to everybody, whether I want to or not. Why should I? It's my own house. I can do what I like in it. I'm not, anyway, doing anything wrong. I'm doing something more right than I've ever done in my life, and yet everybody's got the right to question me and everybody's got the right to be answered and—Hapgood, it's the most bewildering state of affairs that can possibly be imagined. I'm up against a code of social conventions, and by Jove I'm absolutely down and out. I'm absolutely tied up hand and foot and chucked away. Do you know what I am, Hapgood——?"

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He gave a laugh. He wasn't talking a bit savagely and he never did talk like that all through what he told me. He was just talking in a tone of sheer, hopeless, extremely interested puzzlement — bafflement—amazement; just as a man might talk to you of some absolutely baffling conjuring trick he'd seen. In fact he used that very expression. "Do you know what I am, Hapgood?" and he gave a laugh, as I've said: "I'm what they call a social outcast. A social outcast. Beyond the pale. Unspeakable. Ostracized. Blackballed. Excommunicated." He got up and began to stump about the room, hands in his pockets, chin on his collar, wrestling with it—and wrestling, mind you, just in profoundly interested bafflement.

"Unspeakable," he said. "Excommunicated. By Jove, it's astounding. It's amazing. It's like a stupendous conjuring trick. I've done something that isn't done —not something that's wrong, something that's incontestably right. But it isn't done. People don't do it, and I've done it and therefore hey, presto, I'm turned into a leper, a pariah, an outlaw. Amazing, astounding!"

Then he settled down and told me. And this is what he told me.

II

WHEN he was out in France this girl I'd seen—this Effie, as he called her, Effie Bright—had come to live as companion to his wife. It appears he more or less got her the job. He'd seen her at the office with her father and he'd taken a tremendous fancy to her. "A jolly kid," that was the expression he used, and he said he was awfully fond of her just as he might be of a jolly little sister. He got her some other job previously with some friends or other, and then the old lady there died and the girl came to his place while he was away. Something like that. Anyway, she came. She came somewhere about October, 1915, and she left early in March following, just over a year ago. His wife got fed up with her and got rid of her—that's what Sabre says—got fed up with her and got rid of her. And Sabre was at home at the time. Mark that, old man, because it's important. *Sabre was at home at the time*—about three weeks—on leave.

Very well. The girl got the sack and he went back to France. She got another job somewhere as companion again. He doesn't quite know where. He thinks at Bournemouth. Anyway, that's nothing to do with it. Well, he got wounded and discharged from the army, as you know, and in February he was living at home again with his wife in the conditions I described to you when I began. He said nothing to me about the conditions—about the terms they were on; but I've told you what I saw. It's important because it was exactly into the situation as I then saw it that came to pass the thing that came to pass. This.

The very week after I'd been down there, his wife, reading a letter at breakfast one morning, gave a kind of a snort (as he described it) and chucked the letter over to him and said, "Ha! There's your wonderful Miss Bright for you! What did I tell you? What do you think of that? Ha!"

Those were her very words and her very snorts and what they meant—what "Your wonderful Miss Bright for you" meant, was, as he explained to me, that when he was home on leave with the girl in the house they were frequently having words about her because he thought his wife was a bit sharp with her and his wife, for her part, said he was forever sticking up for her.

"What do you think of that? Ha!" and she chucked the letter over to him, and from what I know of her you can imagine her sitting bolt upright, bridling with virtuous prescience confirmed, watching him, while he read it.

WHILE he read it. Sabre said the letter was the most frightfully pathetic document he could ever have imagined. Smudged, he said, and stained and badly expressed as if the writer—this girl—this Effie Bright—was crying and incoherent with distress when she wrote it. And she no doubt was. She said she'd got into terrible trouble. She'd got a little baby. Sabre said it was awful to him the way she kept on in every sentence calling it "a little baby"—never a child or just a baby, but always "a little baby," "my little baby." He said it was awful. She said it was born in December—you remember, old man, it was in the previous March she'd got the sack from them—and that she'd been living in lodgings with it, and that now she was well enough to move, and had come to the absolute end of her money, she was being turned out, and was at her wits' end with despair and nearly out of her mind to know what to do, and all that kind of thing. She said her father wouldn't have anything to do with her, and no one would have anything to do with her—so long as she kept her little baby.

That was her plight: no one would have anything to do with her while she had the baby. Her father was willing to take her home, and some kind people had offered to take her into service, and the clergyman where she was had said there were other places he could get her, but only, all of them, if she would give up the baby and put it out to nurse somewhere: and she said, and underlined it about fourteen times, Sabre said, and cried over it so you could hardly read it, she said: "And, oh, Mrs. Sabre, I can't, I can't, I simply can not give up my little baby. He's mine," she said. "He looks at me, and knows me, and stretches out his tiny little hands to me, and I can't give him up. I can't let my little baby go. Whatever I've done, I'm his mother and he's my little baby and I can't let him go."

Sabre said it was awful. I can believe it was. I'd seen the girl, and I'd seen her stooping over her baby (like I told you) and I can well believe awful was the word for it. Poor soul.

And then she said— I can remember this bit—then she said, "And so in my terrible distress, dear Mrs. Sabre, I am throwing myself on your mercy, and begging you, imploring you, for the love of God to take in me and my little baby and let me work for you and do anything for you and bless you and ask God's blessing for ever upon you and teach my little baby to pray for you as—" something or other, I forget.

And then she said a lot of hysterical things about working her fingers to the bone for Mrs. Sabre, and knowing she was a wicked girl and not fit to be spoken to by any one, and was willing to sleep in a shed in the garden and never to open her mouth, and all that sort of thing; and all the way through "my little baby," "my little baby." Sabre said it was awful. Also she said—I'm telling you just what Sabre told me, and he told me this bit deliberately, as you might say—also she said that she didn't want to pretend she was more sinned against than sinning, but that if Mrs. Sabre knew the truth she might judge her less harshly and be more willing to help her. Yes, Sabre told me that . . .

All right. Well, there was the appeal, "there was this piteous appeal," as Sabre said, and there was Sabre profoundly touched by it, and there was his wife bridling over it—one up against her husband who'd always stuck up for the girl, d'you see? and about two million up in justification of her own opinion of her—there they were; and then Sabre said, turning the letter over in his hands, "Well, what are you going to do about it?"

You can imagine his wife's tone. "*Do* about it! Do about it! What on earth do you think I'm going to do about it?"

And Sabre said, "Well, I think we ought certainly to take the poor creature in."

That's what he said; and I can perfectly imagine his face as he said it—all twisted up with the intensity of the struggle he foresaw and with the intensity of his feelings on the subject; and I can perfectly well imagine his wife's face as she heard him, by Jove, I can. She was furious. Absolutely white and speechless with fury; but not speechless long, Sabre said, and I dare bet she wasn't. Sabre said she worked herself up in the most awful way and used language about the girl that cut him like a knife—language like speaking of the baby as "that brat." It made him wince. It would—the sort of chap he is. And he said that the more she railed the more frightfully he realized the girl's position, up against that sort of thing everywhere she turned.

HE DESCRIBED all that to me and then, so to speak, he stated his case. He said to me, his face all twisted up with the strain of trying to make some one else see what was so perfectly clear to himself; he said, "Well, what I say to you, Hapgood, is just precisely what I said to my wife. I felt that the girl had a claim on us. In the first place she'd turned to us in her abject misery for help and that alone established a claim even if it had come from an utter stranger. It established a claim because here was a human creature absolutely down and out come to *us*, picking *us* out from everybody, for succor. Confound it, you've *got* to respond. You're picked out. *You*. One human creature by another human creature. Breathing the same air. Sharing the same mortality. Responsible to the same God. You've *got* to. You can't help yourself. You're caught. If you hear some one appealing to any one else you can scuttle out of it. Get away. Pass by on the other side. Square it with your conscience any old how.

"But when that some one comes to you you're done, you're fixed. You may hate it. You may loathe and detest the position that's been forced on you. But it's there. You can't get out of it. The same earth as your earth is there at your feet imploring you; and if you've got a grain, a jot, of humanity you must, you must, out of the very flesh and bones of you respond to that cry of this your brother or your sister made as you yourself are made.

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He turned round on me a face gray as ashes. I'd never seen such a color in a man's face. I said, "Sabre! Old man, are you ill? What's up? Shall I come with you?"

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"Well, Hapgood," he went on, "that's one claim the girl had on us and to my way of thinking it was enough. But she had another, a personal claim. She'd been in our house, in our service; she was our friend; sat with us; eaten with us; talked with us; shared with us; and now, now, turned to us. Good God, man, was that to be refused? Was that to be denied? Were we going to repudiate that? Were we going to say, 'Yes, it's true you were here. You were all very well when you were of use to us; that's all true and admitted; but now you're in trouble and you're no use to us; you're in trouble and no use and you can get to hell out of it.' Good God, were we to say that?"

You should have seen his face; you should have heard his voice; you should have seen him squirming and twisting in his chair as though this was the very roots of him coming up out of him and hurting him. And I tell you, old man, it *was* the very roots of him. It was his creed, it was his religion, it was his composition, it was the whole nature and basis and foundation of the man as it had been storing up within him all his life, ever since he was the rummy, thoughtful sort of beggar he used to be as a kid at old Wickamote's thirty years ago. It got me, I can tell you. It made me feel funny. Yes, and the next thing he went on to was equally the blood and bones of him.

In a way even more characteristic. He said, "Mind you, Hapgood, I don't blame my wife that all this had no effect on her. I don't blame her in the least, and I never in the least lost my temper or got angry over the business. I see her point of view absolutely. And I see absolutely the point of view of the girl's father and of every one else who's willing to take in the girl but insists she must give up the baby. I see their point of view and understand it as plainly as I see and understand that calendar hanging on the wall. I see it perfectly," and he laughed in a whimsical sort of way and said, "That's the devil of it."

Characteristic, eh? Wasn't that just exactly old Sabre at school puzzling up his old nut and saying, "Yes, but I see what he *means?*"

Well, wait a bit. He came to that again afterward. It seems that, if you please, the very next day the girl herself follows up her letter by walking into the house. Eh? Yes, you can well say "By Jove." In she walked, baby and all. She'd walked all the way from Tidborough, and God knows how far earlier in the day. Sabre said she was half dead. She'd been to her father's house, and her father, that terrific-looking old Moses coming down the mountain that I've described to you, had turned her out. He'd take her—he had cried over her, the poor crying creature said—if she'd send away her baby, also if she'd say who the father was, but she wouldn't. "I can't let my little baby go," she said. Sabre said it was awful, hearing her. And so he drove her out, the old Moses man did, and the poor soul tried around for a bit—no money—and then trailed out to them.

SABRE wouldn't tell me all that happened between his wife and himself. I gather that, in his quiet way, perfectly seeing his wife's point of view and genuinely deeply distressed at the frightful pitch things were coming to, in that sort of way he nevertheless got his back up against his sense of what he ought to do and said the girl was not to be sent away, that she was to stop.

His wife said, "You're determined?"

He said, "Mabel" (that's her name), "Mabel, I'm desperately, poignantly sorry, but I'm absolutely determined."

She said, "Very well. If she's going to be in the house I'm going out of it. I'm going to my father's, *now*. You'll not expect the servants to stay in the house while you've got this—this woman living with you—" (Yes, she said that.) "So I shall pay them up and send them off, *now*, before I go. Are you still determined?"

The poor devil, standing there with his stick and his game leg, and his face working, said, "Mabel, Mabel, believe me, it kills me to say it, but I am, absolutely. The girl's got no home. She only wants to keep her baby. She must stop."

His wife went off to the kitchen.

Pretty fierce, eh?

Sabre said he sat where she'd left him, in the morning-room in a straight-backed chair with his legs stuck out in front of him wrestling with it. The girl was in the dining-room. His wife and the servants were plunging about overhead.

In about two hours his wife came back dressed to go. She said, "I've packed my boxes. I shall send for them. The maids have packed theirs and they will send. I've sent them on to the station in front of me. There's only one more thing I want to say to you. You say this woman—" ("This woman, you know!" old Sabre said, when he was telling me.) "You say this woman has a claim on us?"

He began, "Mabel, I do. I——"

She said, "Do you want my answer to that? My answer is that perhaps she has a claim on *you*."

And she went.

III

WELL, there you are old man. There it is. That's the story. That's the end. That's the end of my story, but what the end of the story as Sabre's living it is going to be, takes—well, it lets in some pretty wide guessing. There he is, and there's the girl and there's the baby; and he's what he says he is—what I told you: a social outcast, beyond the pale, ostracized, excommunicated. No one will have anything to do with him. They've cleared him out of the office, or as good as done so. He says the man Twyning worked that. The man Twyning—that Judas Iscariot chap, you remember—is very thick with old Bright, the girl's father. Old Bright pretty naturally thinks his daughter has gone back to the man who is responsible for her ruin, and this Twyning person—who's a partner, by the way—wrote to Sabre and told him that, although he personally didn't believe it—"not for a moment, old man," he wrote—still Sabre would appreciate the horrible scandal that had arisen, and would appreciate the fact that such a scandal could not be permitted in a firm like theirs with its high and holy church connections. And so on. He said that he and Fortune had given the position their most earnest and sympathetic thought and prayers—and prayers, mark you—and that they'd come to the conclusion that the best thing to be done was for Sabre to resign.

Sabre says he was knocked pretty well silly by this step. He says it was his first realization of the attitude that everybody was going to take up against him. He went off down and saw them and you can imagine there was a bit of a scene. He said he was dashed if he'd resign. Why on earth should he resign? Was he to resign because he was doing in common humanity what no one else had the common humanity to do? That sort of thing. You can imagine it didn't cut much ice with that crowd. The upshot of it was that Twyning, speaking for the firm, and calling him about a thousand old mans and that sort of slush, told him that the position would be reconsidered when he ceased to have the girl in his house and that, in the interests of the firm, until he did that he must cease to attend the office.

And then old Sabre said he began to find himself in exactly the same position with every one. Every door closed to him. No one having anything to do with him. Even an old chap next door, a particular friend of his called Fungus or Fargus or some such name—even this old bird's house and his society is forbidden him. Sabre says old Fungus, or whatever his name is, is all right, but it appears he's ruled by about two dozen ramping great daughters and they won't let their father have anything to do with Sabre. No, he's shut right out, everywhere.

AND Sabre, mind you—this is Sabre's extraordinary point of view: He's not a bit furious with all these people. He's feeling his position most frightfully, it's eating the very heart out of him, but he's working up not the least trace of bitterness over it. He says they're all supporting an absolutely right and just convention, and that it's not their fault if the convention is so hideously cruel in its application. He says the absolute justice and the frightful cruelty of conventions has always interested him and that he remembers once putting up to a great friend of his as an example this very instance of society's attitude toward an unmarried girl who gets into trouble—never dreaming that one day he was going to find himself up against the full force of it. He said, "If this poor girl, if any girl, didn't find the world against her and every door closed to her, just look where you'd be, Hapgood. You'd have morality absolutely gone by the board. No, all these people are right, absolutely right—and all conventions are absolutely right—in their principle; it's their practise that's sometimes so terrible. And when it is how can you turn round and rage? I can't."

Well, I said to him what I say to you, old man. I said, "Yes, that's all right, Sabre. That's true, though there're precious few would take it as moderately as you; but look here, where's this going to end? Where's it going to land you? It's landed you pretty fiercely as it is. Have you thought what it may develop into? What are you doing about it?"

He said he was writing round, writing to advertisers and to societies and places, to find a place where the girl would be taken in to work and allowed to have her baby with her. He said there must be hundreds of kindhearted people about the place who would do it; it was only a question of finding them. Well, as to that, kind hearts are more than coronets and all that kind of thing, but it strikes me they're a jolly sight harder than coronets to find when it comes

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to a question of an unmarried mother *and* her baby; *and* when the kind hearts, being found, come to make inquiries and find that the person making application on the girl's behalf is the man she's apparently living with, *and* the man with Sabre's extraordinary record in regard to the girl.

I didn't say that to poor old Sabre. I hadn't the face to. But I say it to you. You're no doubt thinking it for yourself. All that chain of circumstances, eh? Went out of his way to get her her first job. Got her into his house. In a way responsible for her getting the sack. Child born just about when it must have been born after she'd been sacked. Girl coming to him for help. Writing to his wife, "If only you knew the truth." Wife leaving him. Eh? It's pretty fierce, isn't it? And I don't believe he's got an idea of it. I don't believe he realizes for a moment what an extraordinary coil it all is. God help him if he ever does. He'll want it.

No, I didn't say a word like that to him. I couldn't. The nearest I got to it was I said, "Well, but time's getting on, you know, old man. It's a—a funny position on the face of it. What do you suppose your wife's thinking all this time?"

He said his wife would be absolutely all right once he'd found a home for the girl and sent her away. He said his wife was always a bit sharp in her views of things but that she'd be all right when it was all over.

I said, "H'm. Heard from her?"

He had—once. He showed me the letter. Well, you know, old man, every fox knows what foxes smell like; and I smelt a dear brother solicitor's smell in that letter. Smelt it strong. Asking him to make a home possible for her to return to so they might resume their life together. *I* recognized it. I've dictated dozens.

I handed it back. I said "H'm" again. I said, "H'm, you remember, old man, there was that remark of her's just as she was leaving you—that remark that perhaps the girl might have a claim on *you*. Remember that, don't you?"

By Jove, I thought for a minute he was going to flare up and let me have it. But he laughed instead. Laughed as if I was a fool and said, "Oh, good Lord, man, that's utterly ridiculous. That was only just my wife's way. My wife's got plenty of faults to find with me—but that kind of thing! Man alive, with all my faults, my wife knows me."

Perhaps—I say, my holy aunt, it's nearly two o'clock! Come on, I'm for bed. Perhaps his wife does know him. What I'm thinking is does he know his wife? I'm a solicitor. I know what *I'd* say if she came to me.

Chapter Three

On a day a month later—in May—Hapgood said:

NOW, I'll tell you. Old Sabre—by Jove, it's frightful. He's crashed. The roof's fallen in on him. He's nearly out of his mind. I don't like it. I don't like it a bit. I've only just left him. Here, in London. A couple of hours ago. I oughtn't to have left him. The chap's not fit to be left. But I had to. He cleared me off. I had to go. He wasn't in a state to be argued with. I was frightened of irritating him. To tell you the truth, I'm frightened now about him. Dead frightened.

Look here, it's in two parts, this sudden development. Two parts as I saw it. Begins all right and then works up. Two parts—morning and afternoon yesterday and a bit to-day. And of all extraordinary places to happen at—Brighton.

Yes, Brighton. I was down there for a Saturday to Monday with my missus. This absolutely topping weather, you know. We were coming back Monday evening. Yesterday. Very well. Monday morning we were sunning on the pier, she and I. I was reading the paper, she was watching the people and making remarks about them. If Paradise is doing in the next world what you best liked doing in this, my wife will ask Peter if she can sit at the gate and watch the demobilized souls arriving and pass remarks about them. She certainly will.

WELL, all of a sudden she began, "Oh, what a frightfully *in*teresting face that man's got!" That's the way she talks. "What a most *in*teresting face. *Do* look, Percy."

I said, "Well, so have I got an interesting face. Look at mine."

"Oh, but *do*, Percy. You *must*. On that seat by himself just opposite. He's just staring at nothing and thinking and thinking. And his face looks so worn and tired and yet so *very* kind and such a *wist*ful look as though he was thinking of——"

I growled, still reading: "He's probably thinking what he's going to have for lunch. Oh, dash it, do stop jogging me. Where is he?"

And then I looked across. Old Sabre! By Jove, you might have pushed me over with one finger. Old Sabre in a tweed suit and a soft hat, and his game leg stuck out straight, and his old stick, and his hands about a thousand miles deep in his pockets, and looking—yes, my wife said the true thing when she said how he was looking. Any one would have taken a second squint at old Sabre's face as I saw it then—taken a second squint and wondered what he'd been through and what on earth his mind could be on now. They certainly would.

I knew. *I* knew; but I tell you this, I could see he'd been through a tough lot more, and thought a considerable number of fathoms deeper in the month since I'd seen him last. By Jove, I could see that without spectacles.

I went over to him. You could have pushed *him* off the seat with one finger when he saw me. Except that you wouldn't have had any fingers worth using as fingers after he'd squeezed your hands as he squeezed mine. Both of them. And his face like a shout on a sunny morning. Yes, he was pleased. I like to think how jolly pleased the old chap was.

I took him over to my wife, and my wife climbed all over him, and we chatted round for a bit, and then I worked off my wife on a bunch of people we knew and I got old Sabre on to a secluded bench and started in on him. What on earth was he doing down at Brighton, and how were things?

He said "Things? Things are happening with me, Hapgood. Not to me—with me. Happening pretty fierce and pretty quick. I'm right in the middle of the most extraordianry, the most astounding, the most amazing things. I had to get away from them for a bit. I simply had to. I came down here for a week-end to get away from them and go on wrestling them out when they weren't right under my eyes. I'm going back to-morrow. Effie was all right—with her baby. She was glad I should go—glad for me, I mean. Poor kid, poor kid. Top of her own misery, Hapgood, she's miserable to death at what she says she's let me in for. She's always crying about it. Crying. She's torn between knowing my house is the only place where she can have her baby, between that and seeing what her coming into the place has caused. She spends her time trying to do any little thing she can to make me comfortable, hunts about for any little thing she can do for me.

It's pathetic, you know. At least it's pathetic to me. Jumped at this sudden idea of mine of getting away for a couple of days. Said it would please her more than anything in the world to know I was right away from it all for a bit. Fussed over me packing up and all that, you know. Pathetic. Frightfully. Look, just to show you how she hunts about for anything to do for me—said my old straw hat was much too shabby for Brighton and would I get her some stuff, oxalic acid, and let her clean it up for me. That sort of little trifle. As a matter of fact she made such a shocking mess of the hat that I hardly liked to wear it. Couldn't hurt her feelings, though. Chucked it into the sea when I got here and bought this one. Make up a funny story for her when I get back about how it blew off. That's the sort of life we lead together, Hapgood. She always trying to do little things for me and I trying to think out little jokes for her to try and cheer her up. Give you another example. Just when I had brought her the stuff for my hat. Met me with 'Had I lost anything?' Made a mystery of it. Said I was to guess. Guessed at last that it must be my cigaret case. It was. She'd found it lying about and took me to show where she'd put it for safety—in the back of the clock in my room. Said I was always to look there for any little valuables I might miss, and wanted me to know how she liked to be careful of my things like that. Fussing over me, d'you see? Trying to make it seem we were living normal, ordinary lives.

"THAT'S the sort of life we lead together, Hapgood—together; but the life I'm caught up in, the things that are happening with me, that I'm right in the middle of, that I felt I had to get away from for a bit—astounding, Hapgood, astounding, amazing."

I'm trying to give you exactly his own words, old man. I want you to get this business just exactly as I got it. Old Sabre turned to me with that—with that "astounding, amazing"—turned and faced me and said:

"Hapgood, I'm finding out the most extraordianry things about this life as we've made it and as we live it. Hapgood, if I kept forty women in different parts of London and made no secret of it, nothing would be said. People would know I was rather a shameless lot, my little ways would be an open secret, but nothing would be said. I should be received everywhere. But I'm thought to have brought one woman into my house and I'm banned.

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Some one said, "That's him!" . . . A kind of threatening murmur went up . . . He seemed to be wedged among a mass of dark and rather beastly faces.

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I'm unspeakable. Forty, flagrantly, outside, and I'm still a received member of society. People are sorry for my wife, or pretend to be, but I'm still all right, a bit of a rake, you know, but a decent enough chap. But I take pity on one poor girl because she clings to her motherhood although she's unmarried, and I'm beyond the pale. I'm unspeakable. Amazing. Do you say it's not absolutely astounding?

"Hapgood, look here. It's this. This is what I've found. You can do the shocking things, and it can be known you do the shocking things. But you mustn't be seen doing them. You can beat your wife, and it can be known among your friends that you beat your wife. But you mustn't be seen beating her. You mustn't beat her in the street or in your neighbor's garden. You can drink, and it can be known you drink; but you mustn't be seen drunk.

"Do you see, Hapgood? Do you see? The conventions are all right, moral, sound, excellent, admirable, but to save their own face there's a blind side to them, a shut-eye side. Keep that side of them and you're all right. They'll let you alone. They'll pretend they don't see you. But come out and stand in front of them and they'll devour you. They'll smash and grind and devour you, Hapgood. They're devouring me.

"That's where they've got me in their jaws, Hapgood; and where they've got Effie in their jaws is just precisely again on a blind, shut-eye side. They're rightly based, they're absolutely just, you can't gainsay them, but to save their face, again, they're indomitably blind and deaf to the hideous cruelties in their application. They mean well. They cause the most frightful suffering, the most frightful tragedies, but they won't look at them, they won't think of them, they won't speak of them: they mean well."

Old Sabre put his head in his hands. He might have been praying. He looked to me sort of physically wrestling with what he called the jaws that had got him and had got her. He looked up at me and he said, "Hapgood, this is where I've got to. This is where I am. Hapgood, life's all wrong, stupid, cruel, blundering, but it means well. We've shaped it to fit us as we think we ought to live and it means well. Means well! My God, Hapgood, the most terrible, the most lamentable self-confession that ears can hear—'I meant well.' Some frightful blunder committed, some irreparable harm inflicted, and that piteous, heart-broken, heart-breaking, maddening, infuriating excuse, 'I meant well. I meant well. Why didn't some one tell me?' Life means well, Hapgood. It *does* mean well. It only wants some one to tell it where it's going wrong, where it's blundering, where it's just missing, and *why* it's just missing, all it means to do."

WITH that he went back to all that stuff I told you he told me when I was down with him last month—that stuff about the need for a new revelation suited to men's minds to-day, the need for new light. I can't tell you all that—it's not my line, that sort of talk. But he said, his face all pink under his skin, he said: "Hapgood, I'll tell you a thing. I've got the secret. I've got the key to the riddle that's been puzzling me all my life. I've got the new revelation in terms good enough for me to understand. Light, more light. Here it is: God is—*love*. Not this, that, nor the other that the intelligence revolts at, and puts aside, and goes away, and goes on hungering, hungering and unsatisfied; nothing like that; but just this: plain, for a child, clear as daylight for grown intelligence: God is—*love*. Listen to this, Hapgood: 'He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him; for God *is* love.' Ecstasy, Hapgood, ecstasy! It explains everything to me. I can reduce all the mysteries to terms of that. One of these days, perhaps one of these days, I'll be able to write it and tell people."

I tell you, old man, you can think what you like about it, but old Sabre, when he was telling me that, was a pretty first-class advertisement for his own revelation. He'd found it all right. The look on him was nearer the divine than anything I've ever come near seeing. It certainly was.

So you see that was the morning part of this that I'm telling you, what I called the first part, and it was not too bad. He'd been through, he was going through, some pretty fierce things, but he was holding up under them. Oh, some pretty fierce things. I haven't told you half. One thing that hit him hard as he could bear was that that old pal of his, Fungus or Fargus, Fargus, as a matter of fact, that old chap fell dying and did die—knocked out by pneumonia special constabling—and those dashed ramping great daughters of his wouldn't let poor old Sabre into the house to see him. Fact. He said it hurt him worse, made him realize worse what a ban he was up against, than anything that's happened to him. It would. The chap dying and him too shocking to be admitted.

THEY did grant him one squint of his old friend, about five minutes, and stood over him like dragons all the time, five of them. Came to him one morning and said, as though they were speaking to a leper through bars, said, sort of holding their noses, "We have to ask you to come to see papa. The doctor thinks there is something papa wishes to say to you."

What it was, apparently, was that the old gentleman had some sort of funny old notion that he was put into life for a definite purpose, and when Sabre saw him he could just whisper to Sabre that he was agonized, because he was dying before he'd done anything that could possibly be it. Poor old Sabre said it was too terrible for him, because what could he say with that pack of grim daughters standing over him to see he didn't contaminate their papa on his death-bed? He said he could only hold his old pal's hand, and had the tears running down his face, and couldn't say a word, and they hustled him out, sort of holding their noses again, and sort of disinfecting the place as they went along.

He said to me brokenly: "Hapgood, I felt I'd touched bottom. My old friend, you know." He said he went again next morning, like a tradesman, just to beg for news. They told him, "Papa has passed away." He asked them, "Did he say anything at the last? Do please tell me just that." They said he suddenly almost sat up and called out something they couldn't understand about, "Aye, ready!" Sabre said he understood and thanked God for it. He didn't tell me what it meant; it broke him right up even talking about it. There was another thing he mentioned but wouldn't go into. Some other great friend, a woman, whom he said he'd cut right off out of his acquaintance—wouldn't answer her letters: realized how the world was regarding him and felt he couldn't impose himself on any one. He seemed to suffer over that, too—badly.

II

WELL, that was the morning, old man. That was the first part, and you see how it went. He was pretty badly in the depths but he was holding on. He'd got this great discovery of his, and the idea of writing it after his History, he said. "If I'm ever able to take up my History again," he said. Badly down as he was, at least he'd got that and he'd also got to help him the extraordinary reasonable, reasoning view he took of the whole business: no bitterness against any one, just understanding their point of view as he always has understood the other point of view, just that and puzzling over it all. On the whole, and considering all things, not too bad. That was the morning. He wouldn't come to lunch with us. He hadn't liked meeting my wife as it was. And of course I could understand how he felt, poor chap. So I left him.

I left him. When I saw him again was about three o'clock and I walked right into the middle of the development that, as I told you, has pretty well let the roof down on him.

I strolled round to his hotel, a one-horse sort of place off the front. He was in the lobby. No one else there. Only a man who'd just been speaking to him and who left him and went out as I came in.

Sabre had two papers in his hands. He was staring at them and you'd ha' thought from his face he was staring at a ghost. What d'you think they were? Guess. Man alive, the chap I'd seen going out had just served them on him. They were divorce papers. The citation and petition papers that have to be served personally. Divorce papers. His wife had taken out divorce proceedings against him. Naming the girl, Effie.

Yes, you can whistle . . .

You can whistle. I couldn't. I had too much to do. He was knocked out. Right out. I got him up to his room. Tried to stuff a drink into him. Couldn't. Stuffed it into myself. Two. Wanted them pretty badly.

Well—I tell you. It was pretty awful. He sat on the bed with the papers in his hand gibbering. Just gibbering. No other word for it. Was his wife mad? Was she crazy? Had she gone out of her mind? Him to be guilty of a thing like that? Him capable of a beastly thing like that? She to believe, *she* to believe he was that? His wife? Mabel? Was it possible? A vile, hideous, sordid intrigue with a girl employed in his own house? Effie! His wife to believe that? An unspeakable, beastly thing like that? He tried to show me with his finger the words on the paper. His finger shaking all over the thing. "Hapgood, Hapgood, do you see this vile, obscene word here? I guilty of that? My wife, Mabel, think me capable of that? Do you see what they call me, Hapgood? What they call

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me by implication, what my wife, Mabel, thinks I am, what I am to be pointed at and called? Adulterer! Adulterer! My God, my God, adulterer! The word makes me sick. The very word is like poison in my mouth. And I am to swallow it. It is to be me, me, my name, my title, my brand. Adulterer! Adulterer!"

I tell you, old man . . . I tell you . . .

I managed to get him talking about the practical side of it. That is, I managed to make him listen while I talked. I told him the shop of the business. Told him that these papers had to be served on him personally, as they had been, and on the girl, too. I said I guessed that the solicitor's clerk I'd seen going out had been down to Penny Green the previous day or the day before and served them on Effie and got his address from her. I told him the first step was that within eight days he had to put in an appearance at the Probate and Divorce Registry and enter a defense—just intimate that he intended to defend the action, d'you see? And that the girl would have to too. After that no doubt he'd instruct solicitors and that of course I'd be glad to take on the job for him.

Well, of all this jargon—me being mighty glad to have anything to keep talking about, you understand—of all this jargon there were only two bits he froze on to, and froze on hard, I can tell you. I thought he was going mad the way he went on. I still think he may. That's why I'm frightened about him. He just sat there on the bed while I talked and kept saying to himself: "Adulterer! Adulterer! Me! Adulterer!" It was awful.

What he caught on to was what I told him about appearing at the Divorce Registry within eight days and about instructing a solicitor afterward. He said he'd go to the Registry at once—at once, at once, at once! And he said very impolitely, poor chap, that he'd instruct no infernal solicitors, he'd do the whole thing himself. He had the feeling, I could see, that he must be spurning this horrible thing, and spurning it at once, and spurning it himself.

He was like a chap with his clothes on fire, crazy only to rush into water and get rid of it. The stigma of the thing was so intolerable to him that his feeling was that he couldn't sit by and let other people defend him and do the business for him; he must do it himself, hurl it back with his own hands, shout it back with his own throat. He'll calm down and get more reasonable in time, no doubt, and then I'll have another go at him about running the case for him; but anyway there was the one thing he could do pretty well there and then, and that was enter his defense at the Registry. So I took charge of him to help him ease his mind that much.

I TOOK charge of him. He wasn't capable of thinking of anything for himself. I packed his bag and paid his bill and took him round to our hotel and it wasn't far off then to the train my wife and I had fixed to get back on. I told my wife what had happened and she played the brick. You see the chap was like as if he was dazed. Like as if he was walking in a trance. Just did what he was told and said nothing. So we played it up on that, my missus and I; we just sort of took him along without consulting him or seeming to take any notice of him. It was too late to do anything that night when we got up to town. He made a bit of a fuss, lost his temper and swore I was trying to hinder him; but my wife managed him a treat, by Jove she was marvelous with him, and we got him round to our flat and put him up for the night. I pushed him off to bed early but I heard him walking up and down his room hours after and talking to himself—talking in tones of horror—"Me! Me! Adulterer!"

It was rather dreadful, hearing the poor chap. You see, what was the matter with him was, being the frightfully clean, intensely refined sort of chap he is, appalling horror at being thought, by his wife who knew him so well, capable of what was so repulsive to his mind. He loathed the very sound of the word that was used against him. Obscene, he kept on calling it. He was like a man fallen in a mire and plucking at the filthy stuff all over him and reeking of it and not able to eat or sleep or think or do anything but go mad with it. That was how it got him. Like that.

Next morning—that's this morning, you understand—he was a little more normal: able to realize things a bit, I mean: thanked my wife for putting him up and hoped he hadn't been horribly rude or anything last night. More normal; you see: still in a panic fever to be off and state at the registrar's that he was going to defend the action; but normal enough for me to see it was all right for him to go straight on home immediately after and tell the girl what she had to do and all that. I told him, by the way, that it would pretty well have to come out now, ultimately, who the child's father was: the girl would practically have to give that up in the end to clear him. You know, I told him that in the cab going along down. He ground his teeth over it. It was horrible to hear him. He said he'd kill the chap if he could ever discover him; ground his teeth and said he'd kill him, now—after this.

WELL, he got through his business about twelve—just a formality, you know, declaring his intention to defend. Then a thing happened. Can't think now what it meant. We were waiting for a cab near the Law Courts. I had his bag. He was going straight on to the station. A cab was just pulling in when a man came up, an ordinary enough looking sort of cove, tall chap, and touched Sabre and said, "Mr. Sabre?" Sabre said, "Yes," and the chap said very civilly, "Might I speak to you a minute, sir?"

They went aside. I wasn't looking at them. I was watching a chap on a bike tumbled off in front of a motor bus, near as a toucher run over. Suddenly some one shoved past me and there was old Sabre getting into the cab with this chap who had come up to him. I said, "Hullo! Hullo, are you off?"

We'd arranged, d'you see, to part there. I had to get back to my chambers. He turned round on me a face gray as ashes, absolutely dead gray. I'd never seen such a color in a man's face. He said, "Yes, I'm off," and sort of fell over his stick into the cab. The man, who was already in, righted him on to the seat and said "Paddington" to the driver, who was at the door, shutting it. I said through the window, "Sabre! Old man, are you ill? What's up? Shall I come with you?"

He put his head toward me and said in the most extraordinary voice, speaking between his clenched teeth as though he was keeping himself from yelling out, he said, "If you love me, Hapgood, get right away out of it from me and let me alone. This man happens to live at Tidborough. I know him. We're going down together."

I said, "Sabre——"

He clenched his teeth so they were all bare with his lips contracting. He said, "Let me alone. Let me alone. Let me alone."

And they pushed off.

I tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going down there to-morrow. I'm frightened about him.

Chapter Four

Sabre's Roof Falls In

HAPGOOD had said to his friend of the effect on Sabre of Mabel's action against him: "He's crashed. The roof's fallen in on him." And that had been Sabre's own belief. But it was not so. There are degrees of calamity. Dumfounded, stunned, aghast, Sabre would not have believed that conspiracy against him of all the powers of darkness could conceivably worsen his plight. They had shot their bolt. He was stricken amain. He was in the crucible of disaster and in its heart where the furnace is white.

But they had not shot their bolt. The roof had not yet fallen on him. They had discharged but a petard, but a mine to effect a breach. The timbers of the superstructure had but bent and cracked and groaned.

Their bolt was shot, the roof crashed in, the four sides of his world tottered and collapsed upon him, with the words spoken to Sabre by that man who approached and took him aside while he stood to take leave of Hapgood.

The man said, "I daresay you know me by sight, Mr. Sabre. I've seen you about the town. I'm the coroner's officer at Tidborough. You're rather wanted down there. I've been to Brighton after you and followed here and just took a lucky chance on finding you about this part. You're rather wanted down there. The fact is that young woman that's been living with you's been found dead."

Sabre's face took then the strange and awful hue that Hapgood had marked upon it.

"Found dead? Found dead? Where?"

"In your house, Mr. Sabre. And her baby, dead with her."

"Found dead? Found dead? Effie? And her baby? Found dead? Oh, dear God—— Catch hold of my arm a minute. All right, let me go. Let me go. Let me go, I say. *Can't* you? Found dead? What d'you mean, found dead?"

"Well, sir, that's rather for the coroner to say, sir. There's to be an inquest to-morrow. That's what you're wanted for."

"Inquest? Inquest?" Sabre's speech was thick. He knew it was thick. His tongue felt enormously too big for his mouth. He could not control it properly. He felt that all his limbs and members were swollen and ponderous and out of his control. "Inquest? Found dead? Inquest? Found dead? Good God, can't you tell me something? You come up to me

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in the street, and all the place going round and round, and you say to me 'Found dead.' Can't you say anything except 'Found dead'? Can't you tell me what you mean, 'Found dead.' Eh? Can't you?"

The man said, "Now look here, sir. I say that's for the coroner. Least said best. And least you say best, sir, if you understand me. Looks as if the young woman took poison. That's all I can say. Looks as if she took poison. Oxalic acid."

"Oxalic acid!"

"Now, see here, sir. You've no call to say anything to me and I've no call to say more to you than I've told you. Is that your cab, sir? Because, if so——"

They went to the cab.

II

ONE of two questions are commonly the first words articulated by one knocked senseless in a disaster. Recovering consciousness, or recovering his scattered wits, "What's happened?" he asks; or "Where am I?" In the first shock he has not known he was hurt. He recovers his senses. He then is aware of himself mangled, maimed, delivered to the torturers.

In that day and through the night Sabre was numb to coherent thought, numb to any realization of the meaning to himself of this that had befallen him. The roof had crashed in upon him but he lay stunned. As one pinned beneath scaffolding knows not his agony till the beams are being lifted from him, so stupefaction inhibited his senses until, on the morrow, he was dug down to in the coroner's court and there awakened.

He could not think. Through the day and through the night his mind groped with outstretched arms as one groping in a dark room, or as a blind man tapping with a stick. He could not think. He could attend to things; he could notice things; he could perform necessary actions; but "Effie is dead." "Effie has killed herself." "Effie has killed herself and her child—now what?" in pursuit of these his mind could only grope with outstretched hands; these, in the dark room of his calamity eluded his mind. He groped and stumbled after them. They stole and slipped away.

In the train going down to Tidborough the man who had accosted him permitted himself to be more communicative. A policeman, observing lights burning in the house at midday on Sunday, had knocked and getting no answer had gone in. He had found the young woman dead on her bed, the baby dead beside her. A tumbler was on a small table and a bottle of oxalic acid, "salts of lemon, as they call it," said the man.

Sabre stared out of the window. "Effie has killed herself. Effie has killed herself and her baby." No, he could not fasten upon it. "Effie has killed herself." That was what this man was telling him. It circled and spun away from him as from the rushing train the fields circled and spun before his vision.

He was able to attend to things and to do things. At Tidborough he took a cab and drove home, and dismissing it at the gate was able to give normal attention to the requirements of the morrow and instruct the man to come out for him at half past eleven; the inquest was at twelve.

He was able to notice things. For years turning the handle and entering this house had been like entering an empty habitation. It struck cold now. It was like entering a tomb. He went into the morning-room. No one was there. He went into the kitchen. No one was there. He stood still and tried to think. Of course no one was here. Effie had killed herself. He climbed to his room, still awkward on stairs with his leg and stick, and went in and stood before his books and stared at them. He was still staring when it occurred to him that it had grown dusk since he had first entered and stared. Effie had killed herself. He went out and along the passage to her room and entered and stared upon the bed. Effie had been found dead. This was where they had found her—dead. No, it was gone; he could not get hold of it.

He turned and stared about the room. Things seemed to have been taken out of the room. The man had said something about a glass and a bottle. But there was no glass or bottle here. They had taken things out of the room. And they had taken Effie out of the room—picked up Effie and carried her out like a—an orgasm of terrible emotion surged enormously within him; a bursting thing was in his throat—. No, it was gone. What phenomenon had suddenly possessed him? What was the matter? Effie had killed herself. No, he could not get hold of it. He turned away and began to wander from room to room. In some he lit lights because you naturally lit lights when it was dark. All night he wandered from room to room, rarely sitting down. All night his mind groped with outstretched hands for that which all night eluded it.

III

IN THE morning, in the mortuary adjoining the coroner's court, his mind suddenly and with shock most terrible made contact with the calamity it had pursued.

In the mortuary—

When he arrived and alighted from his cab he found a small crowd of persons assembled about the yard of the court. Some one said, "There he is!" Some one said, "That's him!" A kind of threatening murmur went up from the people. A general movement was made toward him. What was the matter? What were they looking at? They stood in his way. He seemed to be wedged among a mass of dark and rather beastly faces breathing close to his own face. He could not get on. He was being pushed. He was caused to stagger. He said, "Look out, I've got a game leg." That threatening sort of murmur arose more loudly in answer to his words. Some one somewhere threw a piece of orange-peel at some one. It almost hit his face. What was up? What were they all doing?

A policeman and the coroner's officer came shouldering through the press and helped him toward the court. He thought it was rather decent of them.

The policeman said, "You'd better get inside. They're a bit rough."

At the door of the court Sabre looked across to where on the other side of the yard some men were shuffling out of a detached building. The coroner's officer said, "Jury. They've been viewing the corpse."

"Corpse!" The rough word stabbed through his numbness. He thought: "Corpse! Viewing the corpse! Obscene and horrible phrase! Corpse! Effie!" He made a movement in that direction.

The man said, "Yes, perhaps you'd better."

They took him across and into the detached building.

He was against a glass screen, misty with breaths of those who had stared and peered through it. The policeman wiped his sleeve across the glass. "There you are."

Ah, merciful God! Now, suddenly and with shock most terrible, his mind made contact with that which it had pursued. It had groped as in a dark room with outstretched hands. Now suddenly and with shock most terrible it was as if those groping hands had touched in the darkness a face.

Ah, God, God. This was Effie. This was Bright Effie. This was that jolly little Effie of the old, million year old, days. This! This!

She lay on a slab inclined toward the glass. She was swathed about in cerements. Only her face was visible. Within the hollow of her arm reposed a little shape, all swathed. She had brought it into the world. She had removed it from the world that would have nothing of it. She had brought a thousand smiles into the world but she had given offense to the world and the offended world had thrown back her smiles and she now had expressed her contrition to the world. This was her contrition that she lay here for men to breathe upon the glass, and stare, and rub away the dimness with their sleeves, and breathe, and stare again.

Oh, insupportable calamity! Oh, tragedy beyond support! He thought of her as oft and again he had seen her—those laughing lips, those shining eyes. He thought of her alone when he had left her, planning and preparing this frightful dissolution of her body and her soul. He thought of her in the stupendous moment while the glass paused at her lips. He thought of her in torment of inward fire by that which had blistered her poor lips . . .

A very terrible groan was broken out of him.

They took him along.

IV

THE court was crammed. In two-thirds of its space were crowded benches. At the upper end of the room was a dais, a schoolmaster's desk. Flanking it on one hand were forms occupied by the men Sabre had seen shuffling out of the mortuary. On the other hand a second dais stood. Facing the central dais was a long table at which men were seated on the side looking toward the dais. Two men sat also at the head of this table, facing the jury. As Sabre entered they were in deep conversation with a stunted, hunchbacked man who sat next them at the corner.

Every face in the room turned toward the door as Sabre entered. They might have belonged to a single body and they

(*Continued on page 84*)

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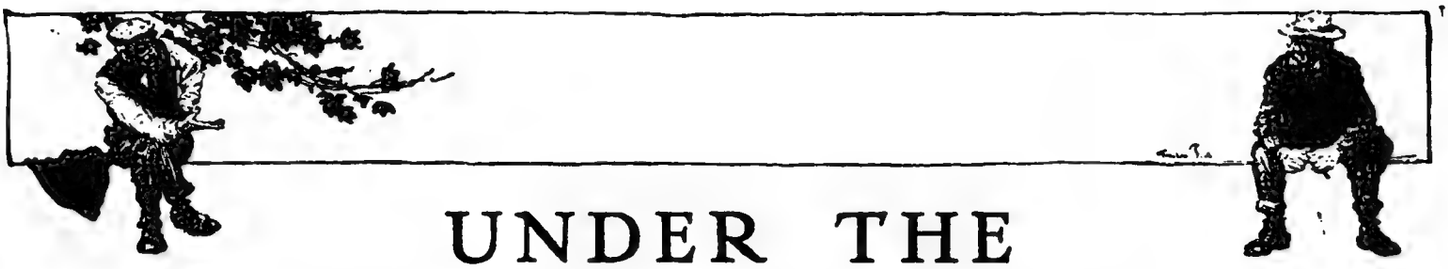

UNDER THE SPREADING CHESTNUT TREE

A VERY efficient deputy sheriff of a small town was obliged, at the request of the citizens, to lock up three vagabonds who had been annoying the residents of the town. A few minutes later the sheriff, meeting him tearing along the street, demanded the reason of his great haste.

"Oh," replied the deputy, "those three bums I have just locked up want to play a game of poker, and I am out looking for a fourth."

TWO American girls were visiting the Louvre for the first time. Coming into the room where the Venus of Milo stands, they looked at it with open mouths. Suddenly one exclaimed:

"My Gawd, Margie, look what them Germans did to that poor Belgium woman!"

AN OLD farmer engaged a city chap to help out for the summer, and for his first job sent him out to bring in the sheep. The city chap started out with a will. In about three hours he returned panting and disheveled, but with all his charges in tow. The farmer was pleasantly surprised. "Not a bad beginning," was his comment. "But what's the idea of the jack-rabbit?" pointing to a white, furry object that lay on the ground, even more exhausted than the farm-hand.

"Good Lord, is that a rabbit?" ejaculated the green hired man. "That's the one it took me so long to catch. I thought it was a lamb."

COLONEL J. H. HAVERLY, the old-time minstrel magnate, once conceived the idea of having Madam Patti for a concert tour under his own direction, and called on her to make a contract. She received him most cordially, and the conversation went along swimmingly until they began to talk terms.

"May I ask your terms for fifty nights, Madam Patti?" said Colonel Haverly.

"Four thousand dollars a night, or two hundred thousand for fifty nights, one-half to be deposited upon signing of the contract," said Patti glibly.

Colonel Haverly swallowed with difficulty two or three times, and then managed to speak.

"Two hundred thousand for fifty nights!" he exclaimed. "Heavens, madam! That is just four times (not right these days; but O. K. for the time Patti was alive) what we pay the president of the United States!"

"Well," said Patti, "why don't you get the President to sing for you?"

EDITOR'S NOTE—Though the sign is the Chestnut Tree, no story is barred by its youth. We will gladly pay for available ones. Address all manuscripts to "The Chestnut Tree," enclosing stamped, addressed envelope.

A YOUNG nobleman visiting Newport was not received with much favor by the younger set. One evening while attending a dinner he sat next to a charming "deb" to whom he said in a very patronizing manner, "Aw, y'know, my dear Miss Marjorie, I passed your house this mawning."

"Thank you," she replied with a brilliant smile. "Thank you, very much."

A LECTURER, on arriving at a meeting in an out-of-the-way town, found that he was wearing one black and one tan shoe. Immediately he sent post-haste to his hotel room for others. "Sorry, sir," said the returned messenger breathlessly, "but it's no better there. I found only one black and one tan one."

SEVERAL excited members of the Law and Order League rushed into the sheriff's office and announced that the town "bad man" had got hold of a bottle of "medicine," climbed a telegraph-pole, exercised his six-shooter indiscriminately, and was even now engaged with a second bottle, and promising to an unapplauding audience an improved performance when he got back to the top of the pole.

"What are we goin' to do about it?" they demanded.

The sheriff uncrossed his right leg and crossed his left leg. He took a number of meditative pulls on his pipe.

"Waal," he said finally, "if that's the case, I reckon we'd better grease the pole."

THE colonel's negro orderly was confined to quarters as the result of a fight. The old man went to see him, and demanded an explanation of his dilapidated condition.

"Well, suh, last night me and Napoleon Sims gets into a li'l friendly argyment over a crap game. Cunnel, befo' I knows it he hits me in de mouf and he knocks out fo' teef, and he hits me in de eyes and closes dem up, and he blame near busts muh nose and muh jaw. Den he gets me down on de floor and stomps on me and cracks three ribs. Fo' God, cunnel, Ah never got so tihd of a man in all of muh life!"

THE oculist was examining the eyes of a patient from Jamaica. He requested the patient to read the top line of the test card, the letters of which ran N P R T V Z B D F H K O. The patient emitted a spluttering sound. "Come, come," urged the doctor, "read the top line." The patient frowned and spluttered again. The doctor was slightly exasperated. "If you can't read it, just say so," he said.

"Well, really, you know," replied the Jamaican, "the letters are perfectly familiar, but I'm hanged if I know the language."

AT A Chamber of Commerce dinner a speaker dwelt at great length upon the suffering people of China. He suggested that all present should give something for them. A small dry-goods merchant arose and said:

"You have made for me a feeling already that something should be given. I move that we give three cheers for China."

"YES," said the old man to his visitor, "I am proud of my girls, and would like to see them comfortably married, and as I have made a little money they will not go penniless to their husbands. There is Mary, 25 years old, and a really good girl. I shall give her $1,000 when she marries. Then comes Bet, who won't see 35 again. I shall give her $3,000, and the man who takes Eliza, who is 40, will have $5,000 with her."

The young man reflected for a moment and then inquired: "You haven't one about 50, have you?"

HE HAD played golf for years with great assiduity, but with little noticeable improvement. Employing the same caddie every afternoon, he fought the greens and hazards unrelentingly. The caddie, however, being discreet and also desirous of tips, never voiced his real opinion of his employer's game.

One day a stranger came to the links and arranged to play a round with him.

"Have you ever seen him play?" he whispered to the boy, nodding toward the stranger.

"Yes, sir," answered the caddie.

"How is his game?"

"Rotten, sir; very rotten."

"How much handicap can I give him?" asked the golfer, rubbing his hands at the prospect of an easy victory.

"Not a stroke, sir; not a stroke," whispered the caddie earnestly.

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IF WINTER COMES

(*Continued from page 81*)

appeared to have a single expression and a single thought: a dark and forbidding expression and a thought dark and hostile. There was again that murmur that had greeted him when he stepped from the cab. At sight of him one of the two men at the head of the table started to his feet. A very big man and with a very big and massive face and terrific eyes who started up and raised clenched fists and had his jaws working. Old Bright. His companion at the head of the table restrained him and drew him down again. A tall, spare, dark man with a thin mouth in a deeply lined face. Twyning. The hunchbacked man beside them twisted about in his chair and stared long and narrowly at Sabre, a very faint smile playing about his mouth; a rather hungry sort of smile, as though he anticipated a bit of a game out of Sabre.

They led Sabre to a seat on the front of the benches.

V

FROM a door behind the central dais a large stout man entered and took his seat. Whispers about the court said "Coroner." Some one bawled "Silence."

The coroner fiddled with some papers, put pince-nez on his nose and stared about the court. He had a big, flat face. He stared about. "Is the witness Sabre in attendance?"

The coroner's officer said, "Yes, sir."

Some one jogged Sabre. He stood up.

The coroner looked at him. "Are you legally represented?"

Sabre's mind played him the trick of an astoundingly clear recollection of the officer at the recruiting station who had asked him, and at whom he had wondered, "Any complaints?" He wondered now. He said, "Represented? No. Why should I be represented?"

The coroner turned to examine some papers. "That you may perhaps discover," he remarked drily.

The court tittered. The hunchbacked man, little more than whose huge head appeared above the table, laughed out loud and rubbed his hands between his knees and made a remark to Twyning. He seemed pleased that Sabre was not legally represented.

A man seated not far from the hunchback rose and bowed and said, "I am watching the interests of Mrs. Sabre."

Sabre started. Mrs. Sabre! Mabel!

The hunchback sprang to his feet and jerked a bow. "I represent Mr. Bright, the father of the deceased."

The coroner bowed to each. The hunchback and the solicitor representing the interests of Mrs. Sabre leaned back in their chairs and exchanged whispers behind the men seated between them.

The jury shuffled up from their seats and were sworn in and shuffled back again. The coroner was speaking. "And you will hear the evidence of the witnesses who will be brought before you . . . and I propose to take first the case of the deceased child . . . two deaths . . . and it will be found more convenient to dispose first of the case of the child. First witness!"

Chapter Five

The Torture Chamber

HAPGOOD said:

Did I say to you last time, after that Brighton business, that the man had crashed, that the roof had fallen in on him? Did I say that? May I never again use superlatives till I've turned over the page to make sure they weren't comparatives. Eh, man, sitting on his bed there at Brighton and gibbering at me, Sabre was a whole man, a sane man, he was a fortunate and happy man, compared with this that I saw come at him down at Tidborough yesterday.

I've told you that chap that came up to him outside the law courts evidently told him the girl had killed herself and that he was wanted for the inquest. Next day I went down, knowing nothing about it, of course. I hit up Tidborough about twelve. No train out to Penny Green for an hour so I went to take a fly. Old chap I went to charter, when he heard it was Sabre's place I was looking for, told me Sabre was at this inquest; said he'd driven him in to it. And told me what inquest. Inquest! You can guess how I felt. It was the first I'd heard about it. Hopped into the cab and drove down to it.

By Jove, old man. By Jove, old man, how I'm ever going to tell you? That poor chap in there baited by those fiends. By Jove. By Jove. You know, old man, I've told you before, I'm not the sort of chap that weeps he knows not why; I never nursed a tame gazelle and all that sort of thing. I can sit through a play thinking about my supper while my wife ruins her dress and my trousers crying over them—but this business, old Sabre up in that witness-box, with his face in a knot and stammering out "Look here—Look here," that was absolutely all he ever said; he never could get any further—old Sabre going through that, and the solicitor tearing the inside out of him and throwing it in his face, and that treble-dyed Iscariot Twyning, prompting the solicitor and egging him on, with his beastly spittle running like venom out of the corners of his mouth. I tell you my eyes felt like two boiled gooseberries in my head; boiled red hot; and a red-hot potato stuck in my throat, stuck tight. I tell you . . .

When I crept into that infernal court, that infernal torture chamber, they were just finishing the case of the child. This solicitor chap—chap with a humped back and a head as big as a house—was just finishing fawning round a doctor man in the box, putting it up to him that there was nothing to suggest deliberate suffocation of the baby. Oxalic-acid poisoning—was it not the case that the girl would have died in great agony? Writhed on the bed? Might easily have overlaid the child? The doctor had seen the position in which she was found lying in regard to the child—would he not tell the jury that she almost certainly rolled on to the child while it slept—that sort of rather painful stuff. Doctor chap rather jibbed a bit at being rushed, but humpback kept him to it devilish cleverly, and the verdict was as good as given. The doctor was just going out of the box when Humpo

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called him back. "One moment more, Doctor, if you please. Can you tell me, if you please, approximately the age of the child—approximately, but as near as you possibly can, Doctor."

The doctor said about five months—four to five months.

"Five months," says Humpo, mouthing it. "Five months." He turned deliberately round and looked directly at Sabre, sitting sort of huddled up on the front bench. "Five months. We may take it, then, the child was born in December last. In December last." Still with his back to the witness and staring at Sabre, you understand, and the jury all staring with him and people standing up in the court to see what the devil he was looking at. "We may take that, may we, Doctor?" He was watching Sabre with a sort of half smile. The doctor said he might take it. The chap snapped up his face with a jerk and turned round. "Thank you, Doctor. That will do." And he sat down. If ever I saw a chap playing a fish and suddenly strike and hook it, I saw it then, when he smiled toward Sabre and then snapped up his face and plumped down. And the jury saw it. He'd got 'em fixed from that moment. Fixed. Oh, he was clever—clever, my word!

That ended that. The coroner rumbled out a bit of a summary, practically told the jury what to say, reminded them, if they had any lingering doubts, that the quality of mercy was not strained—him showing before the morning was out that he knew about as much about mercy as I know about Arabic—and the jury without leaving the box brought in that the child had died of suffocation due to misadventure.

The court drew a long breath, you could hear it. Everybody settled himself down nice and comfortably. The curtain-raiser was over, and very nice too; now for the drama.

They got it.

II

LOOK here, get the hang of the thing. Get a bearing on some of these people. There was the coroner getting off his preamble, flavoring it with plenty of "distressings" and "painfuls" and "father of the deceased well known to and respected by many of us-es." Great big pudding of a chap, the coroner. Sat there, impassive, like a flabby old Buddha. Face like a three-parts deflated football. Looked as if he'd been poured on to his seat out of a jug and jellified there. There was old Bright, the girl's father, smoldering like inside the door of a banked-up furnace; smoldering like if you touched him he'd burst out into roaring flame and sparks. There was Mr. Iscariot Twyning, with his face like a stab—in the back—and his mouth on his face like a scar. There was this solicitor chap next him, with his hump, with his hair like a mane, and a head like a house, and a mouth like a cave. He'd a great big red tongue, about a yard long, like a retriever's, and a great long forefinger with about five joints in it, that he waggled when he was cross-examining and shot out when he was incriminating like the front nine inches of a snake.

That chap! When he was in the full cry and ecstacy of his hunt after Sabre the perspiration streamed down his face like running oil, and he'd flap his great red tongue

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around his jaws and mop his streaming face and chuck away his streaming mane; and all the time he'd be stooping down to Twyning, and while he was stooping and Twyning prompting him with the venom pricking and bursting in the corners of his mouth, all the time he was stooping this chap would leave that great forefinger waggling away at Sabre, and old Sabre clutching the box, and his face in a knot and his throat in a lump and choking out: "Look here. Look here——"

I tell you, old man . . . I tell you . . .

Sabre, when they started to get at it, was sitting on the front bench, braced up forward and staring toward what he was hearing like a man watching his brother balancing across a narrow plank stretched over a crater. He had his hands on the crook of his old stick and he was working at the crook as if he was trying to tear it off. I wonder he didn't, the way he was straining at it. And every now and then while Humpo was leading on the witnesses, and when Sabre saw what they were putting up against him, he'd half start to his feet and open his mouth, and once or twice let fly that frightful "Look here," of his; and old Buddha would give him "Be silent, sir!" and he'd drop back like a man with a hit in the face and sit there swallowing, and press his throat . . .

I tell you . . .

I was standing right across the court at right angles to him. I was wedged tight. Scarcely breathe, let alone move. I wrote on a bit of paper to Sabre that I was here and let him get up and ask for me; and wrapped it round half-a-crown and pushed it across the heads of the mob to a police sergeant. He gave it to Sabre. Sabre snatched the thing as if he was mad at it, and read it, and buzzed it on the floor and ground his heel on it. Just to show me, I suppose. Nice! Poor devil, my gooseberry eyes went up about ten degrees. Bit later I had another shot. I—well, I'll come to that in a minute.

III

THEY pushed off the case with the obvious witnesses—police, doctor, and so on. Then the thing hardened down. Then Sabre saw what was coming at him—saw it at a clap, and never had remotely dreamed of it; saw it like a tiger coming down the street to devour him; saw it like the lid of hell slowly slipping away before his eyes. Saw it! I was watching him. He saw it; and things—age, grayness, lasting and immovable calamity, I don't know what, frightful things—came down on his face like the dust of ashes settling on a polished surface.

You see, what this Humpo fiend was laying out for was, first, that Sabre was the father of the girl's child; second, that he'd deliberately put the poison in her way, and brutally told her he was done with her, and gone off and left her so that she should do what she had done and he be rid of her. Yes. Yes, old man. And he'd got a case! By the living Jingo he'd got such a case as a Crown prosecutor only dreams about after a good dinner and three parts of a bottle of port. There wasn't a thing, there wasn't an action or a deed or a thought that Sabre had done for months and months past but bricked him in like bricking a man into a wall; but tied him down like tying a man in a chair with four fathoms of rope. By the living Jingo there wasn't a thing.

Listen! Just listen and see for yourself. Worked off the police evidence and the doctor, d'you see? Then "Mr. Bright!" Old man comes up into the box. Stands there massive, bowed with grief, chest heaving, voice coming out of it like an organ in the Dead march. Stands there like Lear over the body of Cordelia. Stands there like the father of Virginia thinking of Appius Claudius.

Like this, his evidence went: Was father of the deceased woman (as they called her). Was employed as foreman at Fortune, East & Sabre's. Had seen the body and identified it. So on, so on.

Then Humpo gets on to him. Was his daughter the sort of girl to meditate taking her life? "Never! Never!" Great rending cry that went down to your marrow.

Touching the trouble that befell her, the birth of her child—had she ever betrayed signs of loose character while living beneath his roof? "Never! Never!"

How came she first to leave his house? Was any particular individual instrumental in obtaining for her work which first took her from beneath his roof? "There! There!" Clenched fist and half his body over the box toward Sabre.

"LOOK here!" bursts out old Sabre. "Look here——"

They shut him up.

"Answer the question, please, Mr. Bright." "Mr. Sabre led to her first going from me. Mr. Sabre!"

Had this Mr. Sabre first approached him in the matter or had he solicited Mr. Sabre's help? "He came to me! He came to me! Without rime, nor reason, or cause, or need, or hint or suggestion he came to me!"

Was the situation thus obtained for his daughter nearer her father's house or nearer Mr. Sabre's?—— "Not a quarter of an hour, not ten minutes, from Mr. Sabre's house."

Had the witness any knowledge as to whether this man Sabre was a frequent visitor at the place of the girl's situation? "Constantly, constantly; night after night he was there!"

"Was he, indeed?" says Humpo, mightily interested. "Was he, indeed? There were perhaps great friends of his own standing there, one or two men chums, no doubt?" "No one! No one!" cries the old man, "No one but an old invalid lady, nigh bedridden, past seventy, and my daughter, my girl, my Effie."

That was all very well, all very well, says Humpo. Mr. Bright's word was of course accepted, but had the witness any outside proof of the frequency of these visits to this bedridden old lady, old enough to be the man Sabre's grandmother? Had the witness recently been shown a diary kept by Mr. Twyning at that period? "Yes! Yes!"

And it contained frequent reference to Sabre's mention in the office of these visits? "Yes! Yes!"

Did one entry reveal the fact that on one occasion this Sabre spent an entire night there?

"Look here—" bursts out old Sabre. "Look here——"

Can't get any farther. Buddha on the throne shuts him up if he could have got any farther. "Yes," groans old Bright out

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of his heaving chest. "Yes. A night there."

And on the very next day, the very next day, did this man Sabre rush off and enlist? "Yes. Yes."

Viewed in light of the subsequent events, did that sudden burst of patriotism bear any particular interpretation? "Running away from it," heaves the old man. "Running away from it."

"Look here—" from Sabre again. "Look here—" Same result.

So this Humpo chap went on piling it up from old Bright like that, old man; and all the time getting deeper and getting worse, of course. Sabre getting the girl into his own house after the old lady's death removes the girl from his neighborhood; curious suddenness of the girl's dismissal during Sabre's leave; girl going straight to Sabre immediately able to walk after birth of child, and so on. Blacker and blacker, worse and worse.

And then Humpo ends. "A final question, Mr. Bright, and I can release you from the painful, the pitiable ordeal it has been my sad duty to inflict upon you. A final question: Have you in your own mind suspicions of the identity of this unhappy woman's betrayer?" Old man can not speak for emotion. Only nods, hands at his breast, like a prophet about to tear his raiment. Only nods.

"Do you see him in this court?"

Old man hurls out his arms toward Sabre. Shouts: "There! There!"

Warmhearted and excellent Iscariot leaps up and leads him tottering from the box; court seethes and groans with emotion; Humpo wipes his streaming face; Sabre stammers out: "Look here— Look here." Case goes on.

IV

NEXT witness. Chemist. Funny little chap with two pairs of spectacles, one on his forehead and one on his nose. From Alton. Remembers distinctly sale of the oxalic acid (produced) on Friday before the Saturday of the girl's death. Remembers distinctly the purchaser; could identify him. Does he see him in court? Yes, there he is. Points at Sabre. Anything odd about purchaser's manner? Couldn't say exactly odd. Remembered he sat down while making the purchase. Ah, sat down, did he? Was it usual for customers to sit down when making a trifling purchase? No, not in his shop it wasn't usual. Ah, it struck him then as peculiar, this sitting down? As if perhaps the purchaser was under a strain? No, not for that reason—customers didn't as a rule sit in his shop because he didn't as a rule have a chair in front of the counter for them to sit on. Court howls with laughter in relief from tension. Humpo says sternly: "This is no laughing matter, sir. Stand down, sir." Glares after him as he goes to his seat. Jury glare. Buddha glares. General impression that little chemist has been trying to shield Sabre.

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THE RIDER OF GOLDEN BAR

(*Continued from page 22*)

"If you touch me," she said hysterically, "I'll douse you with boiling water!"

"There, there," he said, with a light laugh, "I didn't mean to scare you. Set the kettle down, there's a good girl."

But the good girl had other ideas. "You get out of here. I don't want you around."

Her show of temper caused his own to flare up. "There's no use for you to get mad. None a-tall. You act like I'd insulted you instead of doing you a honor."

At which her sense of humor came to her rescue and she laughed in his face. He picked up his hat and faced her, scowling.

"I ain't mad," he told her. "Not a bit. It don't pay to get mad with a woman. But I want you to know I'm comin' back for another answer. I ain't satisfied you mean 'no.' And, anyway, I want you and I'm gonna have you. That's all there is to it. You think it over."

HE NODDED stiffly, still scowling, and started toward the door, but paused with his hand on the latch. When he turned and came back to the table, she instantly retreated to the stove and laid her hand on the kettle.

"You needn't go to pick up that thing," he said, both fists clenched on the table-top. "I ain't gonna hurt you. I want to know something. Billy Wingo comes here, doesn't he?"

"He comes—yes. Why not?"

"You like him?"

"What's that to you?"

"Do you like him?"

"He's a friend of mine."

"A girl don't flush up that way over a friend. I know. And I've heard, too. They say you like Bill Wingo a lot. They say you were going with Nate Samson till you met Bill. Is that right?"

"It's none of your business."

"Lemme tell you something, young lady. Don't you think for a minute that Bill Wingo feller can give you one-tenth what I can. Just because he was elected sheriff last week don't signify. Yours truly is the dog with the brass collar around here, and don't you forget it. You marry Bill, and you'll regret it."

"If I marry you I'll regret it, that's sure."

"Not a bit of it. I'm ace-high in the county now and I'll go higher in the territory. You can't keep me down. I'll make money, more'n you can shake a stick at. You needn't think you'll have to live on a ranch all your life. Within three years after you marry me I'll take you—yes, I'll take you to Hillsville to live where you can see folks all you want. You know Hillsville has almost three thousand people. You wouldn't be lonesome there. I——"

"It's no use talking," she interrupted, taking care not to remove her fingers from the kettle. "I wouldn't marry you or anybody else of your crowd, not if he was the last man on earth."

"'My crowd!' What's the matter with my crowd?"

"Your crowd! Yes, I'd ask, I would! What do you suppose I mean? The gang that runs this county, that's what I mean! The gang that has a finger in every

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crooked land deal and cattle deal, the gang that cheats the Indians on the government contracts. Yes, and if it hadn't been for your gang, and for what they've done to the morals of Crocker county you wouldn't have dared to try and lynch young John Dawson the way you did! Let *me* tell you something: The new sheriff will show you a thing or two. *He* is honest!"

"Is that so? Honest, is he? You know who elected him, don't you? *We* did, and *we* own him, body and soul and roll. He'll sit up and talk when we tell him to, and he will lie down and go to sleep when we tell him to; and if he don't, he's mighty liable to run into a spell of bad health. Not that we'll want him to do anything he shouldn't. Not us." Thus Rafe Tuckleton, realizing his temper had carried him away, and that he had said too much by half, thinking it well to right matters if he could, continued hurriedly:

"Those cattle deals you spoke of and the government contracts weren't crooked a-tall. Just straight business, but of course the fellers we got 'em away from are riled up and bound to talk. Naturally, naturally. But don't you get the notion in your head that everything wasn't all right. Everything was perfectly straight and aboveboard, you bet. Shucks, of course it was. I could explain it to you mighty easy, but it would take a lot of time, and whatsa use? Politics ain't for women, or business either, for that matter. You better forget what you've heard about our crowd. It's just a pack of jealous lies, that's all, and if you'll tell me the name of who told you anything out of the way about us, I'll make him hard to find."

"I know what I know," said the stubborn Miss Walton. "You can't fool me! Not for a minute! And I've listened to you long enough! You get out of here and don't you come back! Flit!"

She swung the kettle from the stove. Rafe Tuckleton sprang back two yards. His temper had again gained the ascendency. He was so mad he could have beaten her to a frazzle. But there was not a club handy, and moreover the lady had, by way of reinforcing the kettle, slipped a butcher-knife from the table drawer.

"ALL RIGHT," gritted Rafe, and turned round from the door to shake his fist at her. "I'll get you, you li'l devil! You needn't think for a minute you can get away from me by marrying some one else. I don't give a damn whether it's Bill Wingo or who it is! Within a week after you get married you'll be a widow! A widow, y'understand! I'll show you!"

He went out, slamming the door. Hazel made haste to run round the table and drop the bar in place. Then she went to the window and watched the man cross to the cottonwoods where he had tied his horse.

She uttered a sharp "Oh!" of disgust as he jerked at the horse's mouth and made the animal rear. He brought it down by kicking it in the stomach.

"What a beast!" muttered she with a shudder. "What a cruel beast that man is."

Not till Rafe rode away, quirting his mount into a wild gallop, did she return to her churning. She found the butter had come, and she removed the elmwood dasher and poured off the buttermilk. She put the butter into a long bowl full of water and

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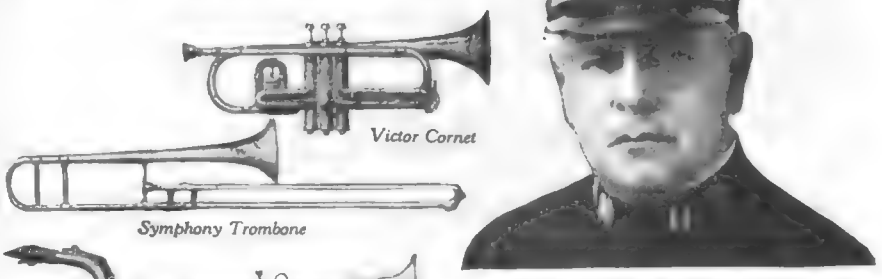

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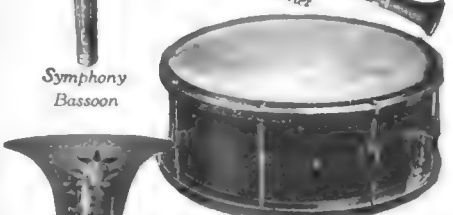

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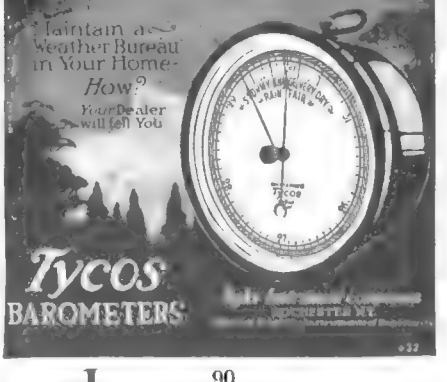

began to wash and knead it, but not with her accustomed briskness. She was thinking of what Rafe Tuckleton had said. He would come again, the brute. She did not want him to. He had made her afraid.

She shivered a little as she poured off the water in the bowl, and refilled it from the water-bucket behind the door. She had no desire to marry anybody yet. She supposed she would some time, of course. All girls did eventually. But he would have to be some nice boy she loved. She guessed yes.

At that very moment a certain nice boy was riding up the draw toward the Walton ranch. He met Rafe Tuckleton riding away. Rafe gave him a nasty look. The nice boy smiled sweetly and pulled his horse across the trail. "Why all the hurry-scurry this bright and summer day?"

It was not a bright and summer day. It was late fall, the clouds were lowering darkly, and there was more than a hint of winter in the air.

Rafe Tuckleton pulled up with a jerk and a slide. "What do you want?"

"I don't know yet," was the reply delivered with still smiling lips but accompanied by a look as chilling as the day. "You been at Walton's?"

"Yep, I have. Not that it's any of your business."

"MAYBE you're right. Let's go back and make sure."

Rafe's blazing rage was so augmented by this naive suggestion that his native prudence was almost overcome by the sharp impulse to argue the matter. But almost is not quite. His coat was buttoned and his six-shooter was under his coat. Bill Wingo's six-shooter was likewise under its owner's coat but the coat was unbuttoned, and—Rafe recalled another day, a day when he had held his hands above his head, while the muzzle of Wingo's gun gazed at his abdomen. That had been a quick draw on the part of Billy Wingo. Uncommonly quick. What happened once may happen again. This is logic.

The logician spat upon the ground. "Because you're elected sheriff now you needn't think that you can boss everybody in the county."

"But I ain't trying to boss anybody," denied Bill. "I'm only askin' a favor of you, only a li'l favor. And I'm hoping you'll see it that way. I don't *want* any trouble with you, Rafe," he added, "or with anybody else."

Rafe hesitated. He stared into Bill's eyes. Bill stared back. Rafe did his best to hold his eyes steady. But there was something about that gray gaze, something that seemed to bore deep down into that place where his sinful soul lived and had its being. The Tuckleton eyes wavered, veered, came back, clung an instant, then looked away over the landscape.

"Turn your horse, Rafe," said Billy Wingo in a soft voice.

Rafe Tuckleton turned his horse. They rode back to the Walton ranch in silent company. Dismounting at the door, Billy was careful to keep his horse between Rafe and himself.

Billy looked across the saddle at Rafe. "You better knock at the door, feller."

With extremely bad grace, Rafe obeyed. Following the knock a window-curtain was pulled aside and Hazel looked out. She nodded and smiled at Billy. The curtain

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dropped. Billy heard the grating of the bar as it was withdrawn from the iron staples. The door had been barred, then. Why? Was Rafe indeed the qualified polecat Billy had half-way suspected him of being when he met him hurrying away from the Walton ranch? But Hazel's smile had been natural as ever. Bill took comfort in that fact.

The door opened. Hazel stood wiping her damp hands on her apron.

"'Lo, Hazel," said Bill. "Everything all right?"

Hazel smiled again. She had beautiful teeth. There was the fetching dimple too.

"WHY of course everything's all right," she told him. "Why wouldn't it be?"

Bill noticed that she did not look at Rafe Tuckleton.

"Here's Mr. Tuckleton," said he.

"I see him," shortly.

"And — you're — sure — everything's — all—right?" Bill drawled in a lifeless voice.

"Of course I'm sure."

"And—you're—sure everything — has —been—all—right—all day?"

Hazel nodded. "Of course it has. Won't you come in, Billy—before the kitchen gets all cold?"

"I'll put the li'l horse under the shed first. He's kinda warm. Rafe, don't lemme detain you. You seemed all in a rush when I met you."

Rafe Tuckleton lingered not.

Billy Wingo led his mount under the shed and returned to the house. Hazel was pouring off the washing-water from the butter when he entered the kitchen.

"What made you bring Tuckleton back?" she asked, pouring fresh water over it.

"I met him coming away from here, and I didn't like the way he looked. I thought maybe—" He let it go at that.

"He was here for a while," said Hazel, bringing her bowl to the table and beginning again to knead the yellow mass of butter. "I don't like that man."

Billy was at the table instantly. "Look here, Hazel——"

"Look here, Billy," she mimicked, lifting calm, black eyes to his face. "Don't you go fussbudgeting. I'm quite capable of managing my admirers."

"Admirers! Him!" gasped Wingo.

"He proposed to me. I turned him down."

"SHOWS your good sense," said Billy, going over to the chair lately vacated by Rafe Tuckleton and sitting down. "But I'd like to know what he's thinking of, the old jake."

Her amused eyes sought his. "Am I such a poor match as that?"

"You know what I mean," he grumbled. "He's got no right proposing to you, no right a-tall. Why, he's old enough to be your father."

"So he is. Do you know I never thought of that?"

"You're foolin' now," grunted Billy. "Tell you, Hazel, what you want is some young feller with property and all his teeth."

"I don't want anybody," she declared, "young or otherwise. Billy, you're sheriff now—" she continued, changing the subject.

Why the Carringtons Bought a Colt

"Telephone nothing," he said. "The wire's cut."

"TOM!" she cried. "There they go. Telephone the police."

"Telephone nothing!" her husband exclaimed. "I can't. They've cut the wire," and he held up the telephone with the severed wire.

"Oh, dear, why can't you make them stop," his wife wailed.

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"Not yet," he interrupted. "I don't take office till the first of the year."

She nodded. "I understand. And I want to ask you a question. It's—it's—you will say it's none of my business, I expect."

"Anything's your business you want to ask questions about. Fly at it."

"Who elected you sheriff, Billy?"

He regarded her in some surprise. "The voters."

"I know, but who manages the voters?"

"You mean the party machine?"

"That's it. Well now, Bill, suppose the machine put a man in office, would he have to do what the machine told him?"

"He would, if he was that kind of a man."

She straightened and gave him a level look. "Billy, they say the gang that runs this county elected you sheriff."

"Who's they—Rafe Tuckleton?"

"Never mind who. What I want to know is do you have to do what that gang tells you to do?"

"I don't have to. Has anybody been saying I'd have to?"

"I—you hear rumors sometimes, Billy. Will you have a free hand then?"

"So far as my powers extend, I will," he said.

"And you'll use it?"

"I'll use it."

"Is—is that quite safe?"

"Safe?"

"Safe to antagonize the gang?"

"It may not be safe for the gang."

Hazel raised a great gob of butter in her two hands and squeezed it out slowly between her fingers. "Couldn't you give 'em their way sort of? Not in everything. I don't mean that. But just enough to keep 'em good-natured?"

His curiosity changed to blank amazement. "You know what you're asking, I suppose," he said coldly. "I thought you didn't like Rafe Tuckleton?"

"I HATE him," was her simple statement. "But I—I'm afraid."

"Afraid? How afraid?"

"Afraid for you."

"Why for me?"

"Because—oh, it's so hard to explain!" she almost wailed. "You misunderstand me so. You think I'm asking favors on their account!"

He believed he detected a sob in her voice. This would never do. Couldn't have Hazel crying.

"If you'd only explain," he suggested soothingly.

"Well," she said, her hands busy in the butter, "Sally Jane Prescott was over here yesterday, and she said what a darn good thing your election was for Crocker county; how you'd reform it and all that, and how you'd surely put out of business the gang that's running it now. I agreed with her, of course, but I never really realized till—till later what it might mean to *you*."

She paused. He awaited her pleasure. After a minute's silence she continued.

"You see, Billy, you've been pretty nice to me—uncle and me. And you've come to be sort of a—sort of a friend kind of and—and I—we don't want to see you hurt," she finished with a rush.

"So that's the reason you think I'd better go easy on the gang."

"It will be safer. You don't have to be

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too open about it. You can arrest the people the gang doesn't care anything about."

"That would be hard on the people I should say."

"It's better than running into danger all the time. I tell you, Billy, as true as I stand here this minute, if you try to fight the gang you won't last out your term."

She clasped her hands and regarded him piteously. When a pretty girl clasps her hands and regards you piteously what are you going to do? Right. You can't help yourself, can you? Neither could Billy.

But when he had kissed her three times on the mouth she pushed him away and cried distractedly. "You mustn't! You mustn't! You don't know what you're doing!"

"Oh, yes I do," he assured her and seized her buttery hands. "We'll be married tomorrow!"

At which she whipped her hands from his grasp and put the table between them. "No! Go over there and sit down!"

"I won't! I love you! And you love me!"

"I don't," she stormed.

"What did you kiss me back for then?" he demanded triumphantly. "You did! You know you did! I felt you!"

This was true. But she continued to keep the table between them despite his efforts to come round to her side.

"You go over there and sit down—please!" she begged. "Please, please, pretty please!"

He went slowly. He sat down. He stretched his long legs out in front of him and teetered his heels on the rowels of his spurs.

"LOOK here, Hazel," he complained, for he was feeling most ill-used, "I don't understand this a-tall. You lemme kiss you three times and then you shove me away, and when I ask you to marry me, you run behind the table. What did you let me kiss you for if you don't love me?"

"I couldn't help myself. You were so quick."

"You kissed me back, too. Don't forget that."

"It was a mistake, all a mistake. You don't love me."

"You don't know a thing about it. I do love you. And you love me, you know you do."

But by this time she had regained complete control of herself. "I don't know anything of the kind. Let's forget it."

As if he could forget the pressure of her soft lips! Why, for another such kiss he would cheerfully have fought a grizzly. For that's the kind of a kiss it was.

He shook his head. "I can't forget."

Her poor heart almost choked her at the words. She wanted him to kiss her again, and keep on kissing her till she told him to stop. How wonderful that would be! But she stifled the desire with an effort of will that turned her cheeks white.

"You must forget," she told him, her chin wobbling.

"Tell me you don't love me and I'll do my best."

"I don't—" she began and paused. To save her life she could not tell this man the contrary of what every fiber of her being was proclaiming. She could not. She compromised. "I don't know," she said tightly. "I don't know."

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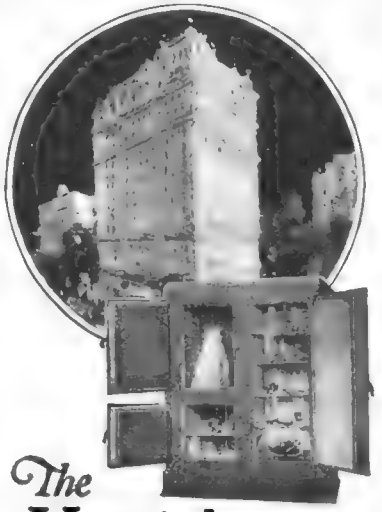

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"But I know," objected Billy. "You just give me a——"

"No," she interrupted, "don't plague me, Billy, please don't. Just—just don't ask me again, that's all."

"Is there anybody else?" he demanded.

She shook her head. "No one."

"Then I've got a chance."

But at this she took fright anew. "You mustn't think of it! You mustn't! I can't marry you now, Billy."

"Now? All right, some other time."

He stooped over as though to pick up something from the floor. Apparently he overbalanced himself, for he fell forward on his hands and knees. When he picked himself up he was within arm's length of Hazel. He reached out two triumphant arms and swept her against him. A bare instant she struggled desperately. Then with a sigh she relaxed and put up her mouth to be kissed.

"THERE, there," he said later, his lips pressed against her hair, "I knew it would be all right once you let yourself go."

She shifted her body slightly in his arms. "Tell me you love me, dearest."

Then when he told her, she asked, "How much? More than anything else in the world? Are you sure?"

What a ridiculous question. Of course he was sure.

"Then you'll do anything I ask, won't you? Promise?"

She raised her head from his shoulder. "Promise?" she repeated, her warm lips on his.

Even as her arms tightened about his neck he felt a tightening at his heart. And the latter was not a pleasant tightening. What did she mean? He loved her—how he loved her dark loveliness, but—what was she driving at?

"I can't promise till you tell what you want me to do."

"No, say you promise. Say it, say it."

But he would not, and she tried a new angle. "If I tell you, will you promise?"

"After you've told me," he persisted.

She sat up straight at this, and took his face between her two warm palms.

"Billy, you know I love you, don't you?"

Looking into her eyes how could he doubt it.

She resumed. "You know I wouldn't ask you to do anything that wasn't for your own good, yet you won't promise the first promise I ever asked you to make."

He shook his head. "I can't."

"All right, I'll have to tell you then, Billy. I've heard things—about your job. I've heard that if you don't do exactly as the gang says you'll be kuk-killed. Oh, not exactly in those words, but I know what was meant. No, I shan't tell you where I heard it. It doesn't matter anyway. It was bad enough when you—I thought you were just a friend, but now—now when you're just everything to me I cuc-can't bear to have you run any risks. Suppose something happens to you, what would I do? I'd die, I think. I'd want to anyway."

At which he tried to kiss away her fears, but these were too deep-rooted for any such old-fashioned remedy as that to be of any avail.

"No, no, don't!" she protested, holding his head away by main force. "Not now. I'm not through yet. Listen. You'll fight the gang, I know you will."

Statement of the ownership, management, circulation, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE, published monthly at New York, N. Y., for April 1, 1921. State of New York, County of New York, ss. Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared JAMES F. BIRMINGHAM, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit: 1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor and business managers are: *Publisher*, THE RIDGWAY CO. (a corporation), Spring and Macdougal Sts., New York City. *Editor*, SEWELL HAGGARD, 223 Spring St., New York City. *Managing Editor*, NONE. *Business Manager*, JAMES F. BIRMINGHAM, 223 Spring St., New York City. 2. That the owners are: (Give names and addresses of individual owners, or, if a corporation, give its name and the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 per cent. or more of the total amount of stock.) *Owner:* THE RIDGWAY COMPANY, a corporation, Spring and Macdougal Streets, New York City. *Stockholders:* FEDERAL PUBLISHING COMPANY, a corporation, 15 Exchange Place, Jersey City, N. J. Stockholder of FEDERAL PUBLISHING CO.: THE BUTTERICK COMPANY, a corporation, Spring and Macdougal Streets, New York City. Stockholders of BUTTERICK COMPANY: GEORGE B. BLACK, 812 Lincoln Ave., Mendota, Ill. JOHN M. DONINGTON, 37 Wall St., New York City. W. H. GELSHENEN, 100 William St., New York City. GUDE, WINMILL & Co., 20 Broad St., New York City. S. R. LATSHAW, Butterick Building, New York City. ESTATE of H. F. MORSE, care of Garfield National Bank, New York City. H. G. MILLARD, 132 East 19th St., New York City. LAURA J. O'LOUGHLIN, 156 Ridge St., Glens Falls, N. Y. MRS ARETHUSA POND, Hotel San Remo, New York City. ERMAN J. RIDGWAY, 280 Broadway, New York City. AUGUSTUS VAN WYCK, 149 Broadway, New York City. R. A. VAN WYCK, 149 Broadway, New York City. G. W. WILDER, Butterick Building, New York City. MARIE A. WILDER, Butterick Building, New York City. BEN F. WILDER, Butterick Building, New York City. 3. *That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent. or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are:* (If there are none, so state.) None. 4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him. 5. That the average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the six months preceding the date shown above is— (This information is required from daily publications only.) JAMES F. BIRMINGHAM, Business Manager. Sworn to and subscribed before me this 30th day of March, 1921. CECIL L. WAHL, Notary Public, Kings County. Certificate filed in New York County. (*My commission expires March* 30, 1922.)

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He nodded a slow head. "I've got to. That's why I took the job of sheriff."

"I knew it," she said sadly. "But you can resign, can't you?"

"I could, but I won't."

"Not if I ask you to?"

"I can't. It would be lying down without a fight, and I've never done that yet. They'd say I was afraid of 'em."

"What does it matter what they say? You'll have me. We'll be together."

He put up a hand and stroked the tumbled waves of her black hair. "You wouldn't love me if I did a thing like that. You'd know I wasn't doing right."

She shook his face between her hands with gentle earnestness. "Yes, I would! I would! I know I would! Everything you do is just right! It would be right if you did it! Don't you see? What does anything matter so long as we have each other? Why do you have to risk your life? Oh, take me away, beloved, take me away, and I'll marry you to-morrow!"

Because of what he did then you'll say he did not love her. But he did—heart and soul and body, he loved her. Yet he put her resolutely from him and held her off at the full stretch of his arms. "There's more to this than you've told me," said he shrewdly. "You're scared. You're scared bad, but it isn't only the thought of the gang that scares you. There's something else. What is it?"

At first she would not tell him. He argued with her.

Finally she surrendered. "If you marry me and stay here, you'll be killed."

He threw back his head and laughed. "Is that all that's worrying you? We'll be married to-morrow like I said."

"No we won't—unless you take me away at once. No, don't kiss me. I mean it."

"Who told you I'd be killed?"

"I won't tell you."

"Tell me and I'll make him come here and take back everything he said."

But the recollection of what Rafe Tuckleton and his outfit had almost succeeded in doing to John Dawson was too fresh in her mind. She did not dare tell Billy who had told her. She knew right well that if she did it would simply mean that her lover would be killed the sooner. The odds against him were great enough as it was.

SHE shook her head. Her eyes were bright with pure terror. "I can't tell you!" she whispered in agony of spirit. "I can't!"

"Was it Rafe?"

"I can't tell you!" twisting her head to escape his eyes.

"It *was* Rafe!"

"It wasn't Rafe!" she lied wearily. "It doesn't matter who it was. Oh, boy, boy, I don't dare marry you if you stay here. And I want to marry you, dear heart. I love you so! I love you! Oh, let's go away where we can be happy together! Why won't you be sensible and take the easiest way out?"

"God knows I would if I could, but I've got to play the hand out. I can't back down because there may be a li'l danger. You know I can't, and down deep you don't want me to. Listen. When you saw Jack Murray was out to bushwhack me, what did you do? Did you take the easiest way out and go on about your business, or

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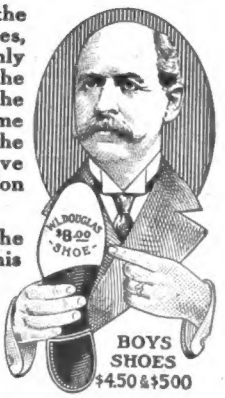

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did you jump right in and risk your life to save mine?"

"That was different," said she piteously, realizing that her cause was lost, but fighting to the last. "I did it for you. I'd be willing to die for you any time. Boy! I love you so hard nothing else matters! Nothing! I'd lie, steal, cheat and fight for you! Oh, I'm shameless, shameless! But that's the way I love you! Why can't you give up everything for me the way I would for you and take me away and marry me?"

He was more than a little shaken. He had to summon all his resolution to withstand her pleadings. But he did more. He got upon his feet and thrust her down into his place in the chair and held her there with one hand for all she struggled might and main to again wind her arms around his neck.

"Listen to me," he said in a voice that trembled. "You don't know what you are asking me to do. If I did it, I'd be a dog, and I won't be a dog even for your sake. Marry me now and we'll see it through, you and I, together."

She shook her head. "I—I can't," she whispered, and added with most human logic, "I don't believe you love me!"

At which he was moved to wrath. "It's you that don't love me! You listen here! I've asked you for the last time to marry me! You turned me down for some fool notion that isn't worth a hill of beans. All right, let it go at that. If ever you change your mind, you'll have to come to me and put your arms around my neck and tell me I was right to stick it out and you were wrong to want me not to. And if you don't do it you're not the girl I took you for, and I wouldn't look at you with a telescope!"

She sat speechless. Without another word he stooped, swept his hat from the floor and went out. And, it must be said to his discredit, he slammed the door behind him.

A long five minutes Hazel was staring wide-eyed at the door. But he did not come back. She crept to the window. He was riding away down the draw. He did not look back. He passed out of sight around the bend. Hazel slid quietly to the floor and, her face buried in her hands, began to cry as if her heart would break.

For her little world had been shattered, and she was left disconsolate among the fragments. Her man did not understand.

"The Rider of Golden Bar"

will be continued in the July

EVERYBODY'S

One last reminder—your next copy of EVERYBODY'S will appear in new dress, the old standard magazine size, as announced in detail on page 3 of this issue. The July number will be on sale at all news-stands June 15th, and publication date will be the 15th of each month regularly thereafter.

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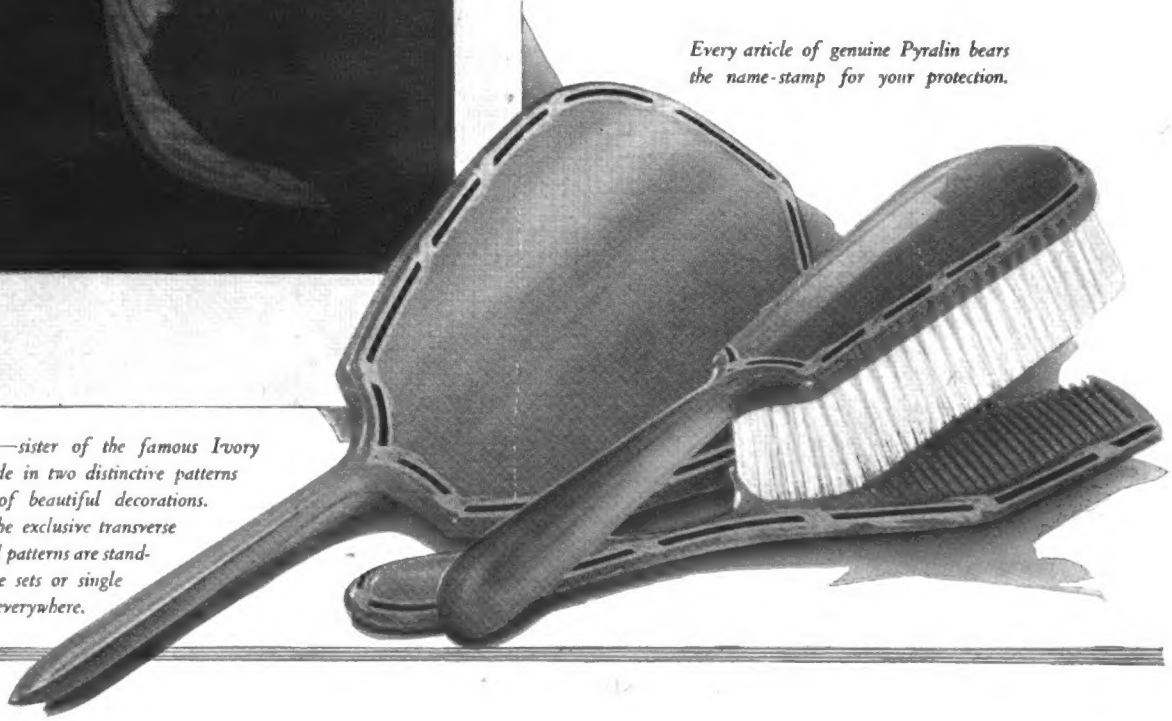

AMBER Pyralin—sister of the famous Ivory Pyralin—is made in two distinctive patterns and in a variety of beautiful decorations. LaBelle, featuring the exclusive transverse handle, is shown. All patterns are standard, sold in complete sets or single pieces, easy to match everywhere.

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